

Acts 9:1-19 The Conversion of Saul a Sovereign ACT

- Was Saul called or converted – a debate?
- Who is Saul
 - He oversaw the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7:58)
 - He approved of Stephen's execution (Acts 8:1)
 - He was persecuting the Church (Acts 8:3)
 - He was on his way to Damascus to continue the persecution (Acts 9:1-2)
 - He changed his name to Paul (Acts 13:9)
 - Was his real name Saul or Paul – A debate?
 - He was a Roman citizen and highly educated (Acts 22:3)
 - He was a Pharisee (Acts 26:5)
 - Would not be one to change his mind easily
 - Was bent on putting an end to "the way"
 - Is this much different than radical Islam?
 - (Acts 22:4-5) "I persecuted this way to the death..."
 - (Acts 26:9-11) "I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things in opposing the name of Jesus of Nazareth..."
 - Do you think you could have changed his mind?
- The conversion of Saul (Acts 9:1-19, 22:6-11, 26:13-18)
 - (Acts 9:3-9) "Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus..."
 - (Acts 26:13-18) "At midday, o king, I saw on the way a light from heaven..."
 - Contradiction? Stood or fell? – a debate?
 - The differences in the three conversion accounts recorded in acts (Act 9:1-19, Acts 22:6-11, Acts 26:13-18) are examples of what is known as substitution, truncation and addition; they are not evidence of falsification.
- Did Saul make a choice to follow Jesus, or was he chosen? - debate?
 - Could he have chosen to say no?
- Why did a Good God allow Saul to persecute Christians just to later convert Him? – A debate?
 - (Romans 8:28) "we know that for those who love God all things..."
- Skeptics would like to see the entire event dismissed as legend, a lie, or a fable cooked up by Constantine. – debate?
 - Changes in the apostle Paul confirmed in the writings others, this is called multiple attestation, a form of evidence as to the truth of a matter.
- Why does the conversion of Saul beg so much attention?
 - The appearance of our risen savior after His ascension
 - The event finds proof in the dramatic changes of Saul's life.
 - Changes that were recorded by others as well, not just Paul.
 - Luke, not Paul, wrote the book of Acts.
- Saul given a new mission (Acts 26:18)– "open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God"
 - Arrives in Damascus (Acts 9:9) "for three days...was without sight..."
- Ananias commissioned (Acts 9:10-12) "Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul..."
 - Ananias is unsure (9:13-14) "Lord, I have heard from many about this man..."
 - The Lord assures Ananias (Acts 9:15-16) "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine..."
- Ananias goes to Saul and lays hands on him (Acts 9:17) "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus..."
 - Ananias addressed Saul as "Brother Saul,"
 - Even the worst can be changed by God
- (Acts 9:19-22) "For some days he was with the disciples at Damascus. 20 And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God."..."

Acts 9:1-19 The Conversion of Saul a Sovereign ACT

- Saul, a former enemy of Christ, and certainly of Christians underwent a major life change from chief persecutor to head promoter,
 - enemy attestation; yet more evidence that Jesus Christ was, in fact, raised from the dead
 - Not a legend, or a fabrication, the disciples did not steal His body; Jesus Christ was raised from the dead.
 - Only Christianity believes in a savior that has paid the penalty for our sins against God.
- Will you serve Him; will you serve Jesus Christ and put him first, or waste your efforts and your life on lesser matters?
- Historical Paul? Historical Jesus? Different from Biblical portrayal based on new information?
 - Historicity of the Bible greater than any other ancient document in our possession.

Points

- If your life currently resembles your former life before professing Christ as your Savior, you need to examine your faith.
 - Philippians 3:7–8 “But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ...”
- We need to be careful of where we place our faith!
 - Colossians 2:8–10 “See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world...”
- Jesus Christ IS SOVEREIGN, The head of all rule and authority, ACTIVELY OBEY Him.
 - Do you spend as much time furthering the kingdom of God as you do worrying about issues?
 - Is your God sovereign?
 - Have you shared the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ with anyone, today, yesterday, last week, last month, last year, or ever?
 - As stated in Colossians 2:10 Jesus Christ is the “Head of all rule and authority.”
 - 1 Thessalonians 5:15–18 “See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone...”
 - Matthew 28:18–20 “And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...”
 - Jesus Christ has selected you, handpicked you for a specific purpose. Just as Ananias was selected to deliver the message to Saul; we are to be His messengers to the world! Just as Ananias, obeyed the command of Jesus Christ even though he had fear, we too are called to overcome our fears and live a life of obedience to Him!
 - This is not a burden; it is an honor...

Challenge

- Try to find 5 people a week, during the month of August, that's only 20 people for the entire month to present the gospel message too and have them tell you no, they do not believe in Jesus Christ and do not want to hear more about the gospel message of Jesus Christ, Maybes do not count.
 - Sometimes it is easier to expect the no and rejoice when your hear yes
 - You see many of us believe that no one wants to hear the Gospel message so we never speak to anyone.
 - The point here is not the conversion of the lost, that is God's work. The point is to be obedient to his command!

Obey our risen savior, The King of all Kings, and enjoy His presence forever this is our greatest reward.