

## On the Road to Damascus

“The Conversion of Saul”

Act 9: 1-18

### Topic

#### I. The Conversion of Saul (Act 9: 1-18)

### Discussion

#### II. Who was Saul?

- a. He was born in Tarsus in Cilicia around AD 1–5 in a province in the southeastern corner of modern-day Turkey.
- b. He was of Benjamite lineage and Hebrew ancestry (**Php 3:5–6**).
- c. His parents were Pharisees
  - i. fervent Jewish nationalists who adhered strictly to the Law of Moses
  - ii. who sought to protect their children from “contamination” from the Gentiles?
- d. Greek would have been despised in Saul’s household, yet he could speak Greek and passable Latin.
- e. His household would have spoken Aramaic, a derivative of Hebrew, which was the official language of Judea.
- f. Saul’s family were Roman citizens but viewed Jerusalem as a truly sacred and holy city (**Acts 22:22-29**).

#### III. Did Saul’s childhood and education start him on this path?

- a. At age thirteen Saul was sent to Palestine to learn from a rabbi named **Gamaliel**, under whom Saul mastered Jewish history, the Psalms, and the works of the prophets.
- b. His education would continue for five or six years as Saul learned such things as dissecting Scripture (**Acts 22:3**).
  - i. It was during this time that he developed a question-and-answer style of teaching known in ancient times as “diatribe.”
  - ii. This method helped rabbis debate the finer points of Jewish law to either defend or prosecute those who broke the law.

#### IV. Who is Gamaliel? (Insight into the man and his teachings)

- a. Gamaliel was a Pharisee and a grandson of the famous Rabbi Hillel. Like his grandfather, Gamaliel was known for taking a rather lenient view of the Old Testament law
  - i. Gamaliel was a first-century Jewish rabbi and a leader in the Jewish Sanhedrin
  - ii. Gamaliel is mentioned a couple of times in Scripture as a famous and well-respected teacher.
  - iii. Indirectly, Gamaliel had a profound effect on the early church.
- b. The first reference to Rabbi Gamaliel is found in (**Acts 5:34-42**)

#### V. Who was Saul as a Young man?

- a. Saul went on to become a lawyer, and all signs pointed to his becoming a member of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish Supreme Court of 71 men who ruled over Jewish life and religion.

- b. Saul was zealous for his faith, and this faith did not allow for compromise.
- c. It is this zeal that led Saul down the path of religious extremism.
  - i. In **(Acts 5:27–42)**, Peter delivered his defense of the gospel and of Jesus in front of the Sanhedrin, which Saul would have heard.
  - ii. **Gamaliel was also present and delivered a message to calm the council and prevent them from stoning Peter.**
- d. Gamaliel is whom Saul studied under.
- e. Saul might also have been present at the trial of Stephen.
- f. He was present for Stephens stoning and death; **(Acts 7:58)**
  - i. *“Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul.”*
- g. After Stephen’s death, "a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem" **(Acts 8:1)**
  - i. *“And Saul approved of his execution. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.*
- h. Saul became determined to eradicate Christians, ruthless in his pursuit as he believed he was acting in the name of God. **(Acts 8:3)**
  - i. *“But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison”.*
  - ii. In modern day terms he terrorized the Christians.

**VI. What is our Measure in comparison to Saul?**

- a. Examples of persecution.
  - i. confiscation or destruction of property
  - ii. incitement to hate
  - iii. arrest, imprisonment
  - iv. beatings, torture, murder, and execution.
  - v. Religious persecution can be considered the opposite of freedom of religion.
- b. Do we act in ways like Saul?
- c. If we Remove the labels, what are we left with.
- d. Sin
  - i. Saul was simply a sinner
  - ii. Just like we are all sinners
  - iii. What is sin- disobedience to God.

**VII. Closing**

- a. What can we learn from Saul’s conversion?
  - i. All sinners can be saved through Christ.
  - ii. Becoming a Christian, we are duty bound to share the Gospel.
  - iii. We must be imitators of Christ always.
  - iv. Conversion is not complete until;
    - 1. Hear **(Romans 10:17)**
      - a. *“So, faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.”*

2. Believe (**Mark 16:16**)
  - a. *“Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”*
3. Repent (**Acts 2:38**)
  - a. *“And Peter said to them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”*
4. Confess (**1 John 4:15**)
  - a. *“Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.”*
5. Baptize (**Acts 22:16**)
  - a. *“And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.”*
6. Remain faithful (**1Pe 1:14-15**)
  - a. *14)“As obedient children do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, 15) but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all conduct.*
  - b. How Jesus comes to us today (**John 1:1-18**)
    - i. The written word

**VIII. Invitation (Mat 7:13-14)**

- a. Our Journey is underway, Just like Saul
- b. We have a choice of destination
  - i. *13)“Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. 14) For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.”*

Trey Wilke  
02-02-2020