

Paul's Conversion

by John Hames

John Hames explores the transformative experience of Paul's conversion, emphasizing the necessity of genuine faith and repentance.

Scripture: Acts 22:3

Topics: "Spiritual Conversion", "Heart Transformation"

Description

John Hames preaches on the powerful conversion of Saul to Paul, highlighting the profound impact of experiential religion and the necessity of a genuine change of heart even for the morally upright. The sermon emphasizes the humbling nature of true conviction by the Holy Spirit, leading to a complete surrender and transformation, as seen in Paul's prostration and subsequent three days of reflection. Paul's example challenges the notion that mere outward morality suffices for salvation, emphasizing the importance of prayer, fasting, and obtaining a clear witness of salvation.

Transcript

"And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (Acts 9:3-5)

It is true, we are now living in a time when theoretical religion is taking the field; when men are no longer entering through the "Wicket Gate" of repentance, but are being trained into Christianity [meaning unclear-DVM].

We are glad, however, that we still have in our midst the blessed, old Bible, the unerring guide.

Now in the text and chapter before us we have the clearest case of experimental religion and its operations found in the Bible. This one case is sufficient material to rout and put to flight all of the Moralists and Do-rights in the world.

Let us carefully notice a few points of interest connected with Paul's conversion.

1. He was by no means a dull, illiterate man, according to his own testimony found in Acts 22:3, which reads as follows: "I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers." It is a common saying these days among the cultured and refined that only the illiterate and common people

believe in experimental and emotional religion. However, let this be as it may, we are certain that one wise man really got converted nearly twenty centuries ago.

2. Notwithstanding Paul's almost unparalleled state of morality he had to be born again, i.e., receive a change of heart. Listen while he tells us of his self-righteousness which he had before really getting converted: "Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee: Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless" (Phil. 3:4-6).

But even with all of this morality he discovered the fact that he was the chief of sinners and on the way to hell with the cutthroats and gamblers. (1 Tim. 1:15) Reader, have you made this wonderful discovery?

3. The next striking fact connected with this experience which deals Moralists and Formalists an awful blow is this: He fell prostrate upon the ground under Holy Ghost conviction. Oh, what a shock to pride and false modesty! These are days when people are too proud to even kneel in prayer but the kind of conviction that our brother Paul got not only brought him to his knees but threw him upon his face. (Acts 9:3, 4)

4. Another truth taught in the lesson which equally impresses us is the thoroughness of his conviction. He did not simply get worked up a little over the death of a relative or friend and shed a few crocodile tears, resolve to do better, sign a card, shake hands with the evangelist and join the church like many do today, but his conviction was so deep and pungent that it put him on the street called "Straight" for three days. So does Bible conviction in this twentieth century. It sends a person over his back life to confess, pay old bills and straighten up the past as far as possible.

Reader, have you ever spent any time on this street? If not you are in possession of the wrong kind of religion no matter how often you frequent the church.

5. Still another valuable truth taught in the lesson which will no doubt be a little difficult for the "Do-right Family" to welcome, is this: Paul prayed. These people teach that it is not necessary for one to pray to get saved, only commence to do right. It is too bad, however, that Paul did not make this discovery and thus save himself from putting in those three long days in Damascus praying and fasting. Poor fellow! It is also too bad that Jesus did not know of this new method when He said: "Men ought always to pray and not to faint" (Luke 18:1). And some devils go "not out but by prayer and fasting" (Matt. 17:21).

6. It is being taught in these days that it is not necessary for one to obtain a witness certifying to the fact that he is saved and made a child of God and an heir of heaven, but Paul obtained a clear, unmistakable witness. (Acts 9:18)

7. The next interesting feature about his experience which is worthy of the convert's notice is this: About as soon as he became converted he joined the cleanest church he could find in all the land. (Acts 9:26)

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