

# What's Involved in a Conversion?

*Promise: faith in Christ comes as a gift from God's Word*

Pastor Timothy A. Duesenberg

Acts 9:1-22; Psalm 30; Revelation 5:8-14; John 21:1-19  
(3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter, 5/1/22)

*And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized; and taking food, he was strengthened. – 18-19a*

**Lead In** – Most of us are familiar with the word ‘conversion’ in a religious or Christian context. It has to do with a change of state or identity, from one thing to another. For instance, changing from a state of unbelief to one of belief, or, changing from one religion to another. And perhaps the most famous conversion of all time is that of Saul found in our First Lesson this morning. This having been said, there are a few false assumptions we might make without a careful reading of the account of the conversion of the man we know better as St. Paul the Apostle...

## I. Saul of Tarsus Was Not A Seeker

- A. A zealous Pharisee and persecutor of the Church...
- B. Any seeking by the *flesh* is not of the true God...
- C. The problem with ‘Seeker Services’ mentality...

## II. The Lord Comes to Saul

- A. Blinded by the Light, the encounter not visual...
- B. It is always the Word of God who/that comes first...
- C. The first word is not of forgiveness, but of conviction!

## III. Saul Becomes A Christian Three Days Later

- A. What credit to Saul is his going to his baptism?
- B. The very nature of baptism implies repentance...
- C. With Holy Baptism comes our vocation...

**Parting Shot** – With newness of life a long road of formation lays ahead of Saul whose name will soon change to Paul. Paul immediately proclaims Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, but he goes through a process of increasing in strength and in argument. In fact, according to Galatians 1 he spent three years in Arabia before traveling to Jerusalem. It will be a dozen years before his first missionary trip, and sixteen years before he writes his first New Testament Letter. All of it belongs to conversion, as it does with us...

**Ph 3:4-6** If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

**Ac 22:3-4** I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as all of you are this day. I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women.

**Ro 3:10-12** None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.

**Ro 10:17** So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

# Acts 9:1-22 ESV

*The Conversion of Saul*

<sup>1</sup>But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest <sup>2</sup>and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup>Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. <sup>4</sup>And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” <sup>5</sup>And he said, “Who are you, Lord?” And he said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.” <sup>6</sup>But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do. <sup>7</sup>The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. <sup>8</sup>Saul rose from the ground, and although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. So they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. <sup>9</sup>And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

<sup>10</sup>Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, “Ananias.” And he said, “Here I am, Lord.” <sup>11</sup>And the Lord said to him, “Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, <sup>12</sup>and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.” <sup>13</sup>But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup>And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name.” <sup>15</sup>But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. <sup>16</sup>For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.” <sup>17</sup>So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” <sup>18</sup>And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized; <sup>19</sup>and taking food, he was strengthened.

For some days he was with the disciples at Damascus. <sup>20</sup>And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is the Son of God.” <sup>21</sup>And all who heard him were amazed and said, “Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem of those who called upon this name? And has he not come here for this purpose, to bring them bound before the chief priests?” <sup>22</sup>But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ.

**Ac 22:16** And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.

**Ac 2:38** 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.”

**Ro 6:4** We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

# What's Involved in a Conversion?

*Promise: faith in Christ comes as a gift from God's Word*

Pastor Timothy A. Duesenberg

Acts 9:1-22; Psalm 30; Revelation 5:8-14; John 21:1-19  
(3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter, 5/1/22)

*And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized; and taking food, he was strengthened. – 18-19a*

**Lead In** – Most of us are familiar with the word ‘conversion’ in a religious or Christian context. It has to do with a change of state or identity, from one thing to another. For instance, changing from a state of unbelief to one of belief, or, changing from one religion to another. And perhaps the most famous conversion of all time is that of Saul found in our First Lesson this morning. This having been said, there are a few false assumptions we might make without a careful reading of the account of the conversion of the man we know better as St. Paul the Apostle...

## I. Saul of Tarsus Was Not A Seeker

- A. A zealous Pharisee and persecutor of the Church...
- B. Any seeking by the *flesh* is not of the true God...
- C. The problem with ‘Seeker Services’ mentality...

## II. The Lord Comes to Saul

- A. Blinded by the Light, the encounter not visual...
- B. It is always the Word of God who/that comes first...
- C. The first word is not of forgiveness, but of conviction!

## III. Saul Becomes A Christian Three Days Later

- A. What credit to Saul is his going to his baptism?
- B. The very nature of baptism implies repentance...
- C. With Holy Baptism comes our vocation...

**Parting Shot** – With newness of life a long road of formation lays ahead of Saul whose name will soon change to Paul. Paul immediately proclaims Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, but he goes through a process of increasing in strength and in argument. In fact, according to Galatians 1 he spent three years in Arabia before traveling to Jerusalem. It will be a dozen years before his first missionary trip, and sixteen years before he writes his first New Testament Letter. All of it belongs to conversion, as it does with us...

**Ph 3:4-6** If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

**Ac 22:3-4** I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as all of you are this day. I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women.

**Ro 3:10-12** None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.

**Ro 10:17** So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

# Acts 9:1-22 ESV

*The Conversion of Saul*

<sup>1</sup>But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest <sup>2</sup>and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup>Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. <sup>4</sup>And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” <sup>5</sup>And he said, “Who are you, Lord?” And he said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.” <sup>6</sup>But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do. <sup>7</sup>The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. <sup>8</sup>Saul rose from the ground, and although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. So they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. <sup>9</sup>And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

<sup>10</sup>Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, “Ananias.” And he said, “Here I am, Lord.” <sup>11</sup>And the Lord said to him, “Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, <sup>12</sup>and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.” <sup>13</sup>But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup>And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name.” <sup>15</sup>But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. <sup>16</sup>For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.” <sup>17</sup>So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” <sup>18</sup>And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized; <sup>19</sup>and taking food, he was strengthened.

For some days he was with the disciples at Damascus. <sup>20</sup>And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is the Son of God.” <sup>21</sup>And all who heard him were amazed and said, “Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem of those who called upon this name? And has he not come here for this purpose, to bring them bound before the chief priests?” <sup>22</sup>But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ.

**Ac 22:16** And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.

**Ac 2:38** 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.”

**Ro 6:4** We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.