

Acts 26:12-18

- A. In the midst of Paul's mad, misdirected campaign of terror against Christians (**vs. 9-11**), Christ arrested Paul, rebuked him, converted him and commissioned him as His minister.
- B. Paul was not then seeking Christ, but he found Him anyway. c/w **ISA 65:1**.
1. What follows is the account of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, not his regeneration. It is the change of his thinking, not his nature.
 - a. It is the purging (purifying) of his ill-informed conscience which he had been dutifully honoring. **ACT 23:1**.
 - b. Levitical religion "...could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience" (**HEB 9:9**) since the continual offerings of sin-burdened creatures implied non-satisfaction of justice. **HEB 10:1-4**.
 - c. The blood of Christ, though, can "...purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (**HEB 9:14**). c/w **ROM 10:4**.
 2. Paul was of the tribe of Benjamin. **PHIL 3:5**.
 - a. Of Benjamin, it was prophesied that he would "...ravin as a wolf" (**GEN 49:27**).
 - b. To ravin is to *seize and devour prey* and those who turn from sin are sometimes made so. **ISA 59:15**.
 - c. Paul's conversion represented a taste of the new heavens and new earth. **ISA 11:6; 65:25**.
- C. When Christ appeared unto Paul, He outshone the sun at its zenith. **v. 13**.
1. The Sun of Righteousness transcends the sun of His creation. **MAL 4:2; REV 21:23**.
 2. The resurrected Christ appearing to Paul was important to his apostleship. **ACT 1:22; 1CO 9:1**.
- D. Christ identified Himself to Paul as the object of Paul's persecution. **v. 15**.
1. The Lord identified with His saints' troubles while on earth. **HEB 4:15**.
 2. When God's beloved are attacked, He takes it personally. **JER 2:3; ZEC 2:8**.
- E. There is an interesting dissimilarity in the accounts of Christ's appearing to Paul.
1. **ACT 9:7** says that the men with Paul *heard* a voice.
 2. **ACT 22:9** says that they *did not hear* the voice.
 3. It was not that God spoke to Paul in some human language which his fellows did not know or in a mystical language only comprehended by Paul. **v. 14**.
 4. There is a sense in which men can hear the voice of Christ, yet not hear it at the same time. **JOH 8:43**.
 5. God the Father spoke to Christ plainly yet some did not perceive it. **JOH 12:28-29**.
 - a. "The unexpected sound of the voice would confound and amaze them; and though there is no reason to doubt that the words were spoken distinctly (Mat 3:17), yet some of the people, either from amazement or envy, would suppose that this was a mere natural phenomenon." (Albert Barnes Commentary)
 - b. The most convincing phenomenon will not convince hardened rebels. **LUK 16:31**.
 6. God is just and pleased to reveal Himself to some and not others. **MAT 11:25-27**.
- F. Christ's arrest of Paul was not to regenerate him, but to convert and depute him as the apostle to the Gentiles. **vs. 16-17; ROM 15:16**.
1. The Son was already *in* Paul before the Damascus road experience, a fact which needed to be *brought to light*. **GAL 1:15-16; 2TI 1:10**.
 2. Paul had been struggling against his God and not realizing it. A child of God is able to do this. **GEN 32:24-30**.
 3. God's longsuffering of Paul's belligerence serves as an example to us. **1TI 1:15-16**.
 4. Paul, the big Law-man, was appropriately blinded on the day of his conversion, which

indicates that true understanding of the Law is through spiritual eyes, not natural.

ACT 9:8-9 c/w ROM 3:19-22; GAL 3:19, 24-25.

- G. Paul's commission to the Gentiles was set forth: "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me" (v. 18).
1. Paul could not open the eyes of men in the sense of regenerating them since one must be born of God to receive the gospel in the first place. **JOH 1:12-13.**
 - a. God's elect need the *eyes of their understanding* opened in the sense of receiving the truth, i.e., conversion. **PSA 119:18; JAM 5:19-20.**
 - b. This is an ongoing process for believers. **EPH 1:16-18.**
 - c. The Lord quickens (makes alive) the dead; His ministers set the living men free. **JOH 5:21; 11:43-44.**
 2. It is in receiving and obeying the truth of the gospel that one is turned "...from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." **JOH 8:12; 1JO 1:7.**
 - a. The Gentiles were especially under the power of Satan. **1CO 10:20; EPH 4:17-19.**
 - b. The gospel of the resurrection with its attendant signs set many free. **ACT 17:29-34; 19:18-20.**
 3. Through Paul's gospel, God's elect among the Gentiles "...MAY receive forgiveness of sins..."
 - a. This is not the *unconditional* forgiveness of sins wrought by Christ *alone* that secures *eternal* life for the elect by His redeeming blood. **EPH 1:7; HEB 1:3.**
 - b. This is the *conditional* forgiveness of sins *in time* for the elect by hearing and obeying the gospel which is a real salvation from Satan's power over the mind and emotions and it establishes fellowship with God. **2TI 2:10; ACT 3:19; 1JO 1:3.**
 4. "...and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in me."
 - a. This is obviously a *conditional inheritance* by which converts are placed *among them* who already have the same inheritance.
 - b. All the elect have an *unconditional eternal inheritance* by the sanctifying work of Jesus Christ on their behalf. **HEB 10:9-14.**
 - c. Only the *converted* elect enjoy this inheritance and sanctification by receiving and obeying *the truth*: an inheritance of a rich, abundant life in Christ among others of like precious faith. **JOH 10:10; 17:17; 1TH 4:3-4; ACT 20:32.**
 5. Jesus Christ took care of the eternal reconciliation of His elect unto God by His personal death. **ROM 5:10.**
 - a. To Paul was committed the *ministry or word of reconciliation*, urging the elect to be reconciled to Christ in practice. **2CO 5:18-20.**
 - b. Christ died *under* our sin; we are to die *unto* our sin. **ROM 6:10-11.**