

God's Plan of Salvation:

1. Hear - Romans 10:17
2. Believe - Mark 16:16
3. Repent - Acts 2:38
4. Confess - Romans 10:10
5. Be baptized - Acts 22:16
6. Live faithfully - Revelation 2:10

Announcements:

Sick: Mr. and Mrs. Douglas, Mr. Douglas' mother, Mr. and Mrs. Hadley, Mrs. Kelly Hall, Mrs. Elizabeth Jackson, Lamar Mathis, Ms. Matchett, Mrs. Faye Newsome, Mrs. Linda Newsome's father, Mr. Sowder, Mr. Vaughn, Mr. Winns, Mrs. LeeAnn Wiser.
Out of Town: Mr. and Mrs. Nick Law.

If you would be interested in any of the following ways to study the Bible, feel free to let us know:

- Home Bible Study - We will come into your home or other place you feel comfortable and study the Bible with you. Bible questions are welcome in these studies and we will seek to give a Bible answer.
- Correspondence courses - We will be glad to mail you a correspondence lesson that you can fill out and mail back to us and we will send you the next lesson.
- Call us with your Bible question - #503-707-6014.
- Visit our website:
www.oakgrovechurchofchristjenningsflorida.com.
- Come and visit - We always strive to have good, practical Bible instruction at each of our assemblies.

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Lessons From the Conversion of Saul

By Derek Long

The Bible introduces us to the character of Saul of Tarsus in Acts 7:58. The first thing we read about Saul doing is watching over the clothes of those who stoned Stephen. Saul would go on from that point continuing to persecute the church (Acts 8:3; 9:1-2). He would later look back on his life at this point and say, "I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man," (1 Timothy 1:13) and the chief sinner (1 Timothy 1:15). The life of Saul, who would later be called Paul (Acts 13:9), changed dramatically. People said of him, "He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith which he once tried to destroy" (Galatians 1:23). What are some lessons we can learn from the conversion of Saul?

- The conversion of Saul shows us some things which will not suffice to remove sin. Saul had a good conscience or thought he was doing was the right thing (Acts 23:1; 26:9-11). Saul acting in good conscience was not enough to save him from his sin. Saul was zealous in his persecution of Christians (Philippians 3:6). Saul's religious zeal was not enough to save him from his sins. Saul saw Jesus on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3-8; 22:6-10; 26:12-15; 1 Corinthians 15:8). Saul religious experience of seeing the resurrected Lord did not save him from his sins. Saul was sorrowful over his sins as evidenced by his fasting for three

days and nights (Acts 9:9). Saul's sorrow over his sins did not save him from his sins. Saul was praying to God (Acts 9:11). Saul's prayers did not save him from his sins.

Ananias was sent to tell Saul what he must do to be saved (Acts 22:10). Ananias said to him, "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Saul had to be baptized to have his past sins washed away by the blood of Christ.

- The conversion of Saul shows us the dramatic change a person can make in their lives. Acts 9:18-20 tells us, "Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized. So when he had received food, he was strengthened. Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus. Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God." It did not take Saul a long time to go from persecutor to teaching others. People often think it will take them years or decades to teach others, overcome some sinful behavior, etc. God's word shows us such is not the case.
- The conversion of Saul reminds us God can save sinners no matter how wicked they might be. In fact, Paul uses his conversion to make this very point. In 1 Timothy 1:12-16 Paul writes, "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying and worthy of

all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason I obtained mercy, than in me first Christ Jesus might show all long-suffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life." Paul essentially tells people if God would save me, He is willing to save you as well.

- The conversion of Saul shows us a person must continue to serve God in order to remain in a saved condition. Saul was saved from his sins and yet he would say, "But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified" (1 Corinthians 9:27). Saul as a person who had his past sins washed away had to continue to be faithful lest he be disqualified and lose the reward.

Other lessons could be learned from the conversion of Saul but I hope these help us to think about some important Bible truths. Paul says to "Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1). Have you done what God commands in order to have your past sins washed away? Have you continued to serve God faithfully as you should? If not, we encourage you to make the necessary changes to your life before it is eternally too late.