

Introduction:

The Book of Acts is called the Book of Conversions as there are specifically eleven different cases in Acts. In **Acts 8** we read of the Samaritans and the Ethiopian Eunuch. Both heard the word of God, ⁵*Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. Acts 8:5;* ³⁵*Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. Acts 8:35.* Both believed the Gospel message, ¹²*But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, Acts 8:12a;* ³⁷*Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Acts 8:37.* Both cases of conversion involved baptism, ¹²*But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized. Acts 8:12;* ³⁶*Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?" Acts 8:36...* ³⁸*So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. Acts 8:38.* We are seeing a pattern in the Book of Acts in these conversions. Now let us turn our attention to Saul of Tarsus. His conversion listed in **Acts 9, 22, 26.**

I) Background

A) Was a Jew, a Hebrew, from the tribe of Benjamin.

⁵*circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee **Philippians 3:5***

1. Had been brought up strictly in accordance with the religion of his fathers.
2. Not a Hellenist or Grecian Jew, as they were more worldly minded.

B) Well learned in the Law

³“I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers’ law, and was zealous toward God as you all are today. Acts 22:3

1. Gamaliel one of the great Rabbis of the Jewish religion.
2. Saul was a scholar.

C) He was successful

¹⁴And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers. Galatians 1:14

1. The health and wealth ministries had nothing on Saul of Tarsus.
2. He would have been listed in the Who’s Who book of Judaism.

D) He was zealous

1. Mentioned a number of times as Saul described himself. **Acts 22.3; Galatians 1.14.**
2. Not a hypocrite pretending to be religious or lukewarm in his service to God.

II) When Was Saul Saved?

A) Not when the Lord spoke to him.

As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. ⁴Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” ⁵And he said, “Who are You, Lord?” Then the Lord said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads.” Acts 9:3-5

1. Saul, saw a light from heaven, spoke with the Lord.
2. Most people would say they are saved if such happened to them.
3. Saul was still lost.

⁶So he, trembling and astonished, said, “Lord, what do You want me to do?” Then the Lord said to him, “Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.” Acts 9:6

B) Not when he fasted and prayed for three days.

⁸Then Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened he saw no one. But they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. ⁹And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank. Acts 9:8-9

1. Saul had a lot to be sorry of.
2. One can only speculate what was going on in the mind of Saul but he had to do something more than fast and pray.
3. There are people who think that they can be saved by praying only.

C) Not when Saul received his eyesight.

1. First God called Ananias.

¹⁰Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, “Ananias.” And he said, “Here I am, Lord.” ¹¹So the Lord said to him, “Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying. ¹²And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he might receive his sight.” Acts 9:10-12

¹²“Then a certain Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good testimony with all the Jews who dwelt there, ¹³came to me; and he stood and said to me, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight.’ And at that same hour I looked up at him Acts 22:12-13

2. There was still something Saul had to do.

3. Many will think a miraculous healing means they are saved, not Saul.

D) Saul was saved when he was baptized.

¹⁸Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized. Acts 9:18

1. We need to see the connection with Saul's baptism and earlier baptisms.
2. This passage does not specifically say why he was baptized but **Acts 22** does.

¹⁶And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.' Acts 22:16

3. This is what Saul had to hear and do.
4. Saul's baptism was not because he saw Jesus, or he spoke with Jesus or as a sign of his salvation, or into some denomination, but for the remission of sins.

E) When am I saved?

1. When you hear the Gospel, Believe, Repent, Confess Christ, and are baptized to wash away your sins.

III) We Also learn From Saul

A) One is not so bad they cannot be saved.

1. Saul was a persecutor,

¹Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest ²and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Acts 9:1-2

2. Threats, murder, having men and women bound in prison.

3. A persecutor of Jesus.

⁴Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” Acts 9:4

⁹“Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. ¹⁰This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. ¹¹And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities. Acts 26:9-11

4. Even to the point of going into the synagogues to drag out those teaching the Gospel.

B) One can be sincere and still be lost.

1. Saul was ignorant of Jesus being the Christ.

¹²And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, ¹³although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. 1 Timothy 1:12-13

2. Despite all the bad things Saul did, he had a good conscience.

¹Then Paul, looking earnestly at the council, said, “Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.” Acts 23:1

3. Sincere people living in all good conscience can be lost.

C) A sincere person will accept the truth and change.

1. Once Saul, saw the light he changed.