



Repentance Tabernacle Church

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Paul's New-Birth Experience!

Lesson Text: Acts 9:1-20

Focus Verses: Acts 9:17-18 ⁻¹⁷ And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. ¹⁸ And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

Truth About Covenant: God can radically transform His enemies into His covenant people.

Covenant Context: In Acts 8, God invited the Samaritans into covenant with Him. Although the Samaritans were partly Gentile, they were also partly Jewish. However, here in Acts 9, God recruited a zealous Pharisee named Saul to preach the gospel to Gentiles, setting up the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 12 to bless all nations through the Jews.

One of the most iconic conversion stories in the Bible is the apostle Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus. He was extremely knowledgeable of Hebrew law and prophecy. He sincerely believed he was doing God's good work as he zealously persecuted Christians. Saul had already consented to Stephen's brutal execution and had broken into houses all around Jerusalem looking for Christians to persecute and imprison (Acts 8:3). However, his murderous intent could not be contained in Jerusalem. He received intel and permission from the high priest to travel to Damascus to find even more Christians to imprison.

While Saul had a plan to persecute Christians, God had a plan of His own. God knew that someone as zealous as Saul would make an excellent warrior for His cause. God also knew that someone as educated and thoughtful as Saul would require an experience he would never be able to deny. God blinded Saul with a bright light and spoke to him with a booming voice from Heaven. Saul knew such an experience could only happen by the power of the God he knew as Jehovah. When the voice identified Himself as Jesus, Saul finally realized that Jehovah and Jesus were one and the same—Jesus was Jehovah who came in flesh.

Saul so completely embraced Jesus Christ that he would later describe the old covenant of the Law as "the ministry of death" and considered himself to be one of the "ministers of the new covenant" (2 Corinthians 3:6-7, NKJV). Under the old covenant, his training and pedigree were points of pride. However, under the new covenant, Saul would count these credentials as "rubbish" (Philippians 3:8, NKJV). A personal relationship with Jesus Christ was of more value and a greater qualification than anything he could attain by his own power or merit.

His missionary efforts would be readily accepted by non-Jews if he used a Greek and Roman name (Paul) rather than a distinctly Hebrew name (Saul). His ministry did include Jews, but Paul was primarily an apostle to Gentiles. Under the old covenant, Gentiles were regarded as "*aliens*," "*strangers*," and "*foreigners*," without any hope of salvation (Ephesians 2:12, 19). However, under the new covenant, Jews and Gentiles are now "fellowcitizens with the saints and of the household of God" (Ephesians 2:19). The old covenant of circumcision no longer divided humanity, and the new covenant of Jesus Christ now unified humanity.

It was a fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy that the new covenant would be one written on the heart, rather than on tables of stone. Paul summed up this new covenant relationship in this manner: "*For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit*" (1 Corinthians 12:13).

Just as Saul was willing to be transformed when he had an undeniable experience with Jesus Christ, so we must allow the Lord to redirect our steps when we are going down a wrong path. Any path that leads us away from God is a wrong path. We must be willing to allow God to guide our path in every juncture of our lives. We must choose to abandon our former prideful, sinful way of thinking and allow ourselves to be transformed through the Holy Spirit dwelling inside of us. All of us have an opportunity like Saul to embrace Jesus Christ when we hear the gospel. Join with Paul and allow the truth of God's Word and His Holy Spirit to change our hearts and minds.

If Paul welcomed all believers as fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, present-day believers are without excuse. Every person, regardless of how different each one may seem from us, is still a child of God, made in His image, who God is wanting to transform by the power of His indwelling Holy Spirit. He is just waiting on us to tell them all about Him.