

“The Violent Capture of a Rebel Will”

Acts 9:1-19 (22:3-21; 26:4-20)

I. Saul by Himself: Compulsion (9:1-2)

A. Saul’s Background (Self-portrait: Acts 22:3; 26:4-5; Galatians 1:13-14; Philippians 3:4-6)

1. With respect to his birth –

- A Jew
- Of the tribe of Benjamin
- From Tarsus (Acts 21:39)
- A citizen of Rome (Acts 22:27-29)

2. With respect to his training –

- By trade, a _____ (Acts 18:3)
- By heritage and disposition, a _____
- By promise, a disciple of _____

3. With respect to his commitment –

- “a Hebrew of the Hebrews”
- With respect to the “traditions of the elders,” _____.
- With respect to legal behavior, _____
- With respect to the followers of Jesus, _____

B. Saul’s Attitude

1. He gave approval to the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7:58; 8:1)
2. He was “breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord” (9:1)
3. He persecuted Christians “in raging fury” (Acts 26:11)

C. Saul’s Actions

1. He sought to destroy the church (8:3)
2. He pursued, punished, imprisoned, persecuted the saints to their death (Acts 26:10)
3. He pursued Christians to other cities

D. Saul’s Perspective: “The Way” was like a _____ that had to be destroyed.

1. Blasphemy #1: a _____ Messiah (Deuteronomy 21:23)
2. Blasphemy #2: an obsolete _____ (Acts 7)
3. Requirement for coming of Messianic Age – Israel’s _____ of the Mosaic Law
4. Precedent for “purging” of immoral and apostate people – Numbers 25:1-5, 6-15.

II. Saul and Jesus: Confrontation (9:3-9)

A. Saul “arrested”

1. A light from heaven
2. A voice in Aramaic
3. Saul sensed that he was in the presence of God or his angel.

B. A life-reversing conversation

1. Jesus’ question: “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?”
2. Saul’s confusion: “Who are you, Lord?” (1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8; Gal. 1:16; Acts 9:27)

3. Jesus' identification: *"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting."*
 - _____ had been telling the truth (Acts 7:56)
 - _____ worst fears had materialized (Acts 5:39)
4. Jesus' instructions: *"But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do."*

C. An enlightening blindness

1. "I have been _____."
2. "I have been _____ (Acts 26:14)
 - The witness of _____
 - The witness of his _____ (Romans 7:7-11)
3. "I have been _____" (2 Corinthians 4:4, 6; 1 Timothy 1:13)
4. "I have been _____" (1 Timothy 1:13-16)

III. Saul and Ananias: Commission (9:10-19)

A. The persuasion of Ananias

1. Reason #1: Saul has seen a vision in prayer – he is expecting you.
2. Reason #2: He is my _____ instrument to carry my name...
3. Reason #3: He must _____ for my name

B. The ministry of Ananias

1. _____: "Brother Saul"
2. _____: "Placing his hands on Saul"
3. _____: "Jesus who appeared to you on the road . . ."
4. _____: "He was baptized"
5. _____: (Acts 22:14-15)
6. _____

C. The impact on Saul

1. Immediate:
 - Filled with the Holy Spirit
 - Sight was restored
 - Strength was renewed
2. Long term: Paul understood this to be his appointment of _____
(1 Corinthians 9:1; 15:7-10; Galatians 1:11-17).

IV. Saul and Us:

A. The Nature of Conversion

1. It is experienced only by _____ (1 Timothy 1:14-16; Philippians 3:4-10)
2. It is _____ by God (2 Corinthians 4:6)
3. It often includes a lengthy, _____ (Acts 26:14)
3. It involves a personal _____ with Jesus (John 17:3)
4. It requires _____ to the Lordship of Christ (Acts 22:10)
5. It includes a new relationship with fellow _____
6. It results in profound _____ (Acts 26:16-20)
 - _____ immediately (2 Corinthians 5:17)
 - _____ over time (Colossians 3:10)

Summary: Conversion is the _____ on a life-time journey of discipleship.

- B. You may not turn out to be a "Paul," but perhaps you can be a(n) "_____."