

## A Dramatic Conversion

Saul - Paul

*"Who are you Lord? (Saul's Q) I am Jesus whom you are persecuting" (Acts 9:5).*

At the time Jesus answered Saul's question, Saul had become a madman! In Paul's own words he later stated: *"On the authority of the chief priests I put many of the saints in prison, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. Many a time I went from one synagogue to another to have them punished, and I tried to force them to blaspheme. Since I was terribly enraged (incensed) at them, I even went to foreign cities to persecute them"* (Acts 26:10-11).

In His sovereignty, God Almighty through His amazing grace had singled out Saul for redemption. When Saul saw a very bright light and at the same time heard a voice say: *"Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?"* he knew instinctively the voice was that of the Lord's, but need some confirmation ...which he received when the Lord responded *"I am Jesus whom you are persecuting."* Paul experienced true repentance realizing that for years he had been resisting and fighting against the Lord. Through the conviction of the Holy Spirit, his resistance had now disappeared. As Paul retells the story he asked the Lord "what should I do" (Acts 22:10)? Jesus explains to Paul that He was sending him to the Gentiles to *open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a share among those who are sanctified by faith in Me* (Acts 26:16-18).

Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus was indeed dramatic and left him unable to see for three days (Acts 9:9). In one sense, the Lord had blinded Paul and in doing so *opened the eyes of his heart*. The Lord instructed Paul to get up and continue his journey to Damascus (led by his friends). Upon arriving at the house of Judas, Paul met Ananias (whom the Lord prepared beforehand to meet Paul) and as the Lord instructed Ananias placed his hands-on Paul immediately and something like scales fell off Paul's eyes and he was able to see again (Acts 9:18-19).

From that point on Paul was a totally different man ...his conversion was without question!

Before: Hated the name of Christ	After: Revered His Name
Before: Hated Christians	After: He Became a dedicated follower of Christ
Before: Persecuted Christians	After: Goes to prison and eventually killed as a Christian
Before: Purposed to stamp out Christianity	After: Purposed to spread the love of Christ
Before: Righteousness earned (the Law)	After: Salvation/righteousness through grace
Before: Served God out of fear and anger	After: Motivated out of a love for God and others

Regardless of what we may or may not experience at the moment of Salvation, all Believers are made righteous and receive eternal life, because of God's grace. A believer in Jesus changes – we are new creatures, the old has passed and the new is here (2 Cor. 5:17). As with Paul we have *"all sinned and fall short of the glory of God"* (Romans 3:23).

This truth begs the question: In what ways should God's saving grace impact my life? Give some specifics.