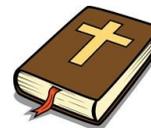


Conversion!

Exactly when Paul began his mission of destruction against the church of Christ is unknown. The fear of him was significant. Christians were very concerned at the mention of the name of this “wolf” who stalked “the fold of the Lamb” (Acts 9:13,26; cf. 26:11).



Which of the twelve apostles did Herod kill by the sword?

Saul of Tarsus first appears in the biblical record as a witness to the stoning of Stephen—even “consenting” to his death (Acts 7:58; 9:1). His persecution of Christians, as portrayed in the book of Acts via his own testimony, was relentless—though he *thought* he was doing God’s will (23:1; 26:9). Pursuing saints unto foreign cities (26:11), he beat, imprisoned, and had them put to death (22:19). Later he would write that “*beyond measure* I persecuted the church of God, and made havoc of it” (Galatians 1:13). The memories of these attacks would linger for many of his earthly days (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:9; Ephesians 3:8; 1 Timothy 1:15).

That ambition to exterminate Christianity from the face of the earth was to radically change, however. And the record of how that occurred is as amazing as it is inspiring.

According to Luke’s historical record (Acts 9:1ff), Saul, armed with arrest warrants for those of the Christian Way, departed from Jerusalem toward Damascus, some 140 miles to the north. As he drew near that city, a light brighter than the noonday sun suddenly engulfed him. A voice inquired: “Saul, Saul, why do you continue to persecute me?” The double use of his name suggests a reproof (cf. Matthew 23:37; Luke 10:41; 22:31). Saul responded: “Who are you, Lord?” The title “Lord” was used as a term of respect, for it seems Saul did not truly know who had spoken.



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

The voice was identified as Jesus of Nazareth! The persecutor was instructed to enter Damascus where he would be informed as to what he “*must do*.” Blinded as a consequence of this miraculous vision in which Christ *actually* appeared (9:17; 1 Corinthians 15:8), Saul was led into the city.

For three days he fasted and prayed. His sins were still unforgiven! Finally, Ananias, a messenger selected by God, arrived. He restored Saul’s sight and commanded him to “*arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on his name*” (Acts 22:16). Forgiven sins! After certain days passed, the former persecutor began to proclaim among his fellow Jews that Jesus “is the Son of God” (see Acts 9:19-22). Amen. We should proclaim His name too!

The apostle says he was told to “be baptized.” The original Greek word is interesting. It is a middle voice form, *literally therefore*: “have yourself immersed” (cf. Robertson 1930, 391). This word suggests “a decisive and immediate” action. Saul personally had to make the arrangements for his immersion. This specific language is consistent with the concept that baptism is *a personal decision*. Becoming a Christian IS and remains today *a personal decision!*

Jesus plainly said to His disciples, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” His statement is still true today. An active response is still needed today!

You may have a significant “conversion story” to share. Will you share it? Will you tell someone about the love of Jesus Christ in your life? If you have not been converted to Christ, then you are in a severely serious condition—Hell is on the horizon if you die in that condition. Please, actively respond to Jesus today. Change the condition you’re in! A man named Saul did...you can too!

To all our visitors: *Please feel free to participate!*

You should expect to hear singing with voices only, a few “family” announcements, prayers spoken, and see the Lord’s Supper offered, then free-willed giving, and Gospel preaching from the Bible.

Any response is up to you and will be kindly received.

We are glad you decided to worship God with us!

Bday/Anniv Lunch: 2nd Sunday...

Ice Cream Supper: Sunday (8/4) after PM services.

Friday Bible Study: from 7 to 8 PM!

We are studying some New Testament commands of God that apply to us today...

NMCCH: We are waiting to hear of the next item to gather.