

**“Saul, A Chosen Instrument”
God’s Purpose in Conversion:
Acts 9:1-19, Part 1
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Introduction: From Murderer to Missionary

Headline conversions, No such thing. Each person has a unique testimony, and God will use anyone who will submit to His will.

Some people are more visible than others, but prayer warriors and servants are just as important.

Philip the Deacon, whom we have studied in Acts, did some pretty amazing things. Not many people get transported by God from one place to another.

History does record the lives of some who were extremely dedicated, gave their lives for the gospel, or who were severely persecuted. Night and day conversions. Yet, we are all ordinary people whom God chooses to use. Every conversion is special and a miracle in itself. God can save anybody, anytime, anywhere, anyway, and for any purpose. James, son of Alphaeus, was chosen to be a disciple by Christ, and we know almost nothing about the man. Was he useless to the kingdom? No! God simply chose to leave him in obscurity.

Examples of Chosen Vessels: No Conversion, No Salvation. Luther, Jim Vaus (Mobster saved at Billy Graham crusade, Chuck Colson

Verse 15: Chosen “Instrument/Vessel”

C. S. Lewis- *A proud man is always looking down on things and people, and of course, as long as you're looking down, you can't see something that is above you.*

Greek: Chosen- εκλογη, chosen or election. By divine selection.

Greek: Vessel, σκευος, – Implement, a hollow vessel for containing things. Can be a human body. Wife or the mast of a ship. Chief instrument in sailing. A sail, goods, implement, or a piece of equipment. Chosen for salvation. Chosen by Jesus. Chosen for a purpose. Chosen for holiness. Chosen for suffering.

You may have never understood this, but God knew you from eternity past. You were chosen. He called you. It makes sense that if you are chosen, then you will be called. If you are called, you will be justified. If you are justified, you will be glorified.

Rom 8:29-30

29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. 30 And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

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Salvation Explained

The Father Chose you: Eph 1:3-10

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. 4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. **In love** 5 he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—

The Son Redeemed You:

6 to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has **freely given** us in the One he loves. 7 In him we have **redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the**

riches of God's grace 8 that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. 9 **And he made known to us the mystery of his will** according to his good pleasure, which **he purposed in Christ**, 10 to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment — to bring all things in heaven and on earth together **under one head, even Christ**.

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The Holy Spirit Seals You: Eph 1:11-14

11 In him we were also chosen, having been predestined (proorizo) according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, 12 in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. 13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession — to the praise of his glory.

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God, who is rich in mercy, has chosen you in love to be sanctified in Christ so that you can fulfill the purpose He has planned for your life. This is the Divine call. We saw this with the Ethiopian Eunuch too. There is no way Saull, the minister of persecution, would ever be saved without God drawing him to salvation. Do you see that? You would also be lost without that Divine call as well.

The mystery of salvation is this... God does all of this without taking your freewill from you. You can't explain that or understand it. But it does not negate it.

As the Greek text tells us, God chooses an empty vessel and by way of the HS goes after that individual and draws them to the truth. He then awakens the soul with prevenient grace so that the

dead sinner can make a spiritual decision for Jesus Christ. And people tell me all the time that God is not benevolent and kind. They hate the God who is the *hound of heaven*. The God who has loved them for all eternity and sought them relentlessly does not hate them.

My friend, you are no less a chosen vessel for Christ. Your soul is just as valuable as the soul of Paul the Apostle.

Quote: The late Alan Redpath, longtime Pastor and Bible teacher at the historic Moody Church in Chicago, put it best: ***“The conversion of a soul is the miracle of a moment, the manufacture of a saint, is the task. Of a lifetime.”***

Main proposition – God has a plan for your life. God desires to share that with you. He wants you as a chosen vessel. No one is beyond God’s reach. Conversion is a journey.

"Mel Trotter was a barber by profession and a drunkard by perversion. So debauched had he become that when his young daughter died, he stole the shoes she was to be buried in and pawned them for money to buy more drinks. One night he staggered into the Pacific Garden Mission in Chicago and was marvelously saved. Burdened for the men of skid row, he opened a rescue mission in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He went on to found more than sixty more missions and became supervisor of a chain of them stretching from Boston to San Francisco."(Elgin S. Moyer, *Who Was Who in Church History* [New Canaan, Conn: Keats, 1974], 411).

One day in August 386, a professor of rhetoric named Aurelius Augustine sat despondently in his garden. Although the son of a Christian mother, he had abandoned his mother’s faith in favor of the Persian religion known as Manichaeism (Christian and Gnosticism). He also took a mistress, with whom he lived for

thirteen years. Abandoning Manichaeism as unsatisfactory, he continued a futile search for truth (He wasn't searching; God was drawing). Through the preaching of the church Father Ambrose, he became intellectually convinced of the truth of Christianity. Yet he held back, "prevented from accepting the faith by weakness in dealing with sexual temptation" (R. S. Pine-Coffin, "Introduction," to Saint Augustine: Confessions [New York: Penguin, 1978], 11). Now, in the midst of his turmoil, he heard a child's voice singing in Latin *tolle lege* ("take and read"). In his Confessions, he describes what happened next:

"I stemmed my flood of tears and stood up, telling myself that this could only be a divine command to open my book of Scripture and read the first passage on which my eyes should fall... So I hurried back to the place where [his friend] Alypius was sitting, for when I stood up to move away I had put down the book containing Paul's Epistles. I seized it and opened it, and in silence I read the first passage on which my eyes fell":

Not in reveling and drunkenness, not in lust and wantonness, not in quarrels and rivalries. Rather, arm yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ; spend no more thought on nature and nature's appetites (Rom. 13:13-14).

I had no wish to read more and no need to do so. For in an instant, as I came to the end of the sentence, it was as though the light of confidence flooded into my heart and all the darkness of doubt was dispelled.

(Confessions VIII, 12, translated by R. S. Pine-Coffin [New York: Penguin, 1978])

Delivered from a life of sin and confusion, Augustine went on to become the greatest theologian the church had known since the Apostle Paul.

"Saul's Conversion" How Does He Become a Useful Vessel?

Elements of Conversion:

Drawing, Dropping, Delivering, Directing, Devotion.

Drawing – Ethiopian Eunuch, Nicodemus, Zacchaeus. Luther, Vause, Colson.

Dropping - Saul

*We may be saved by fear or love.

I. Saul the Murderous Menace: vv. 1-2

- “Meanwhile” Chapters 1-8 record all the spiritual activity going on in the world, and big shot Saul is not even aware of it. How about you? Know what’s going on? Do you have a clue what God’s doing all around you? Saul really believed he was doing God’s will. Either that, or he didn’t care and was doing his own will. Many people think they have the world by the tail, and they are just pitiful losers in God’s world. They are absolute nobodies.
- Saul had his life planned out; so did I. Verse 3 says Saul is on **his** journey. Notice the word “he” in the first few verses.
- Notice the words “he” and “him” in the first 3 verses.

Greek: poreuomai- “journeyed,” traveled, move from one place to another. Same root as verse 31. Translated as *living* or *walking*.

The church – walked or living in the fear of God. **Great contrast!**

What road are you on? Which journey? Broad? Narrow? Your will? His will? John 14:6- He is your way, **hodos**. Conversion puts you on a journey with Jesus in His way, not yours. He has a better plan for your life.

Jesus said if we are not with Him, we are against Him. Saul thought he was with God. What highway are you on? Are you going to Damascus, and God wants you on the highway Jesus has planned for you? You climbed the ladder of success and got to the top and found out your ladder is on the wrong wall?

- Misplaced zeal, passion in the wrong place. (Heathens are easier to reach than religious people). Saul's zeal was impressive to others who had the same zeal. I'm never impressed with wealth, passion, or threats if they are in the wrong direction. *People's idea of success is messed up today.* It will be revealed when Jesus comes. Don't judge before the appointed time.

Prov 16:17

17 The highway of the upright avoids evil;
he who guards his way guards his life.

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Prov 15:19

19 The way of the sluggard is blocked with thorns,
but the path of the upright is a highway.

NIV

Prov 16:17

17 The highway of the upright avoids evil;
he who guards his way guards his life.

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Isa 35:8-10

8 And a highway will be there;
it will be called the Way of Holiness.
The unclean will not journey on it;
it will be for those who walk in that Way;
wicked fools will not go about on it.

9 No lion will be there,
nor will any ferocious beast get up on it;
they will not be found there.

But only the redeemed will walk there,
10 and the ransomed of the Lord will return.

They will enter Zion with singing;

everlasting joy will crown their heads.
Gladness and joy will overtake them,
and sorrow and sighing will flee away.
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Wrong Roads lead to death

Prov 7:26-27

26 Many are the victims she has brought down;
her slain are a mighty throng.
27 Her house is a highway to the grave,
leading down to the chambers of death.
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Isa 30:19-22

19 O people of Zion, who live in Jerusalem, you will weep no more. How gracious he will be when you cry for help! As soon as he hears, he will answer you. 20 Although the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, your teachers will be hidden no more; with your own eyes you will see them. 21 Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, **"This is the way; walk in it."** 22 Then you will defile your idols overlaid with silver and your images covered with gold; you will throw them away like a menstrual cloth and say to them, "Away with you!"
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Saul is on the wrong road. He is living the wrong life. The Greek text tells us that Saul is literally breathing out murderous chants of death to God's chosen people. The religious Saul is a murderer. He is straightway threatening the elect of God with slaughterous language and zealous emotions.

- And where did Saul get this authority and power? From the religious, legalistic crowd. Isn't it always the religious

people? Even Muslims have factions: Suni, Shias, Ibadi, Ahmadiyya, and Sufi. They will even kill each other.

- Do you remember the fundamental question Jesus got when He performed a great work of God? “From where do you get your authority?” Legalists don’t like any other authority than their own. That’s why it’s so pleasing to quiet a liberal because they don’t know what to do when you override their authority with truth.
- Later on, he would write the most beautiful letter about the church (Ephesians). He is now breathing threats. Fuming hatred for Christ and His followers. His lifestyle or purpose was one of opposition to Jesus.
- Acts 22:4-5; 26:9-10; Gal 1:13-14 (Compare).

Gal 1:13-17

13 For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. 14

I was advancing in Judaism beyond many Jews of my own age and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers. 15 But when God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased 16 to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not consult any man, 17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went immediately into Arabia and later returned to Damascus.

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- Saul made use of a treaty Rome had made with the Hasmoneans a century earlier. The Sanhedrin would gladly destroy Christianity and extradite Christians back to Jerusalem from the Diaspora.
- **Let me make this truth clear. Just because the Government says it’s legal doesn’t make it biblical.**

- He was after those of the “**Way.**” I love this description of our journey with Jesus. **The Way!**
 - * Acts 18:26: Aquila and Priscilla taught Apollos The Way of God more clearly.
 - * Hebrews 10:19: The Holy Place of God, A new and living Way.
 - * 2 Peter 2:2: “Many will follow their shameful **Ways** and will bring the way of truth into disrepute.”
 - * John 14: I am The **Way**, The Truth, The Life....

Quote – “The way,” says Vincent, is “*The characteristic direction of life as determined by faith in Jesus Christ.*”

You **are** on a journey, period! You are on a *Jesus Journey (Way)*, or your own planned journey (Way). Jesus tells us to take His yoke upon ourselves because His burden is easy and light. We have no choice about having a yoke. We will have a yoke that He gives or our own yoke. Yoke in Matthew 11:29 refers to the life you choose.

Matt 11:28-30

28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 **Take** my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will **find** rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

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Illustration: Joseph A. Norton lived in 1859 and was a little mad. He claimed himself to be the Emperor of California. He became obsessed with the idea and dressed the part of Emperor and walked the streets proclaiming it. The people made fun of him but paid small amounts of money as taxes and allowed him to print his own money. All this was done as a joke. When he died in 1880, he had claimed to be the Emperor of the USA and

Mexico. He lived in his own delusion. A little man with a little life. Just like Saul, his life was nothing. We would all say this man was crazy, but if we are not on a *Jesus Journey*, we are doing the same thing. *We do no less if we are not on His timetable, doing His will, in His way.*

* Saul was a Big man with a little life.

II. The Menace Meets Almighty God – vv. 3-9

- This is when God **drops** a man. God is tired of doing it your way. This is the Holy Spirit's **interruption**.
- Ten Ways To Know You're Saved: First point... “Has there been a HS **interruption** in your life?”

* The interruption takes on many different forms; God chooses to reach people in many different ways. God knows exactly how to get our attention. Every conversion is unique. Conversions are like fingerprints. The **DNA** of salvation, you might say. God knows exactly how to reach a certain individual. People like the story of how many have deathbed confessions and how vile and wicked people get saved. That’s not the best or the worst conversions. Takes the blood of Christ for us both, and kids that avoid sin by getting saved in SS at an early age is the best testimony.

- Here is where you get instructions on what you are going to do with yourself. Saul went to arrest people in Damascus, but he ended up preaching there. Verse 20 is the best ever!!! This is where your travel plans change.
- Flashing light, this is the presence of God or His Glory, the Shekinah Glory. You realize He is Holy and you ain’t!

Light purifies. Light reveals truth. Light is overpowering and blinding. Saul was being introduced to the Light of the world. This was a flashing light- **periastrapto**, around completely. An enveloping light. That's what happens when God is calling. He will envelop you in light. He comes after you.

- He **fell down**. Finally... Humility. People say, "You know ole Bubba. He will never surrender to Jesus. He's the worst of the worst. That boy's wicked. He will never come around!" That's not true. We are dealing with the power of God, folks. God can shake a man to his core and make him weep like a child.

* Pride will take multitudes to Hell. Just give in to the drawing of the HS. My favorite Greek word here is **aiphnidios** (**αιφνιδιος**). SUDDENLY! Unexpected and unaware. From where did this sudden, blinding, and powerful light come? Heaven... **ouranos**. A word you need to know.

There are three Hebrew words. And three Greek words. For the word heaven.

Hebrew: Shamayim- a word for the heavens in general: **Gagal**- A word used to reference the atmospheric heaven which envelops the earth. **Shachaq**- a word which refers to the third heaven, refers to God's house.

Greek: Ouranos- This word refers to the immediate. Atmospheric heavens around the Earth.. **Mesouranema**- Which speaks of the 2nd heaven, the sky and the planets. **Epouanios**- This word speaks of the 3rd heaven mentioned in John 14:2 (In My Father's House). This is the Father's house and 2nd Corinthians 12:2.

- Three men in the NT have seen into the third heaven: Paul, John the beloved, and Stephen.

Verse 4:

- The text says Saul fell. A participle which means he fell and stayed down. The word fell is **pipto**, which means to light on or fall. Its root means to even fly. With this information, it lets me know what happened. Saul was so struck so hard with this light that it made him jump off his camel and hit the ground. Then he stayed down.
- His companions didn't see Jesus, but they heard the sound. They were speechless, (**eneos**, silent from astonishment) v.7. Remember Simon the Sorcerer. He astonished the people with his false power. When you see the real thing, you don't need worldly astonishment anymore. Jesus has unlimited power and authority. He has power, and God's authority to use it.
- God made it personal— He uses Saul's name twice. This is how a person is **drawn**. That's serious. Did your parents ever call your name twice or thrice? Did you ever get called by your full name? Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? Salvation is close when God calls you by name. Salvation is personal; salvation is between you and God, only! No one can be saved for you. This is where the Calvinists have failed in understanding that the Sovereignty of God works in and through the free will of man. The two working together is biblical. **All that the Father gives me will come to me; And all that come to me I will in no eyes cast out.**
- What has Christ ever done to hurt you? Why would Saul persecute Jesus? For the first time, Saul hears the voice of God. "Why are you persecuting me?" **Do you remember the first time you heard the voice of God?** God does not speak to us directly like this today,

but I still know when He is speaking. The first time I heard God's voice, I was 7.

- You may say to me that you do not hear the voice of God. **Really?** Is Jesus Lord? Do you believe the bible is the Word of God? Is he your Savior? Do you know when you sin? Do you know that you are supposed to worship God? Do you know that you are supposed to give a tithe to God's work? Do you work on holiness in your life? Do you work on obedience? Do you desire the Word of God? How could you say you don't know the voice of God?

John 5:37-40 Pharisees Can't Hear:

37 And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, 38 nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent. 39 You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, 40 yet you refuse to come to me to have life.

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John 10:1-6 Sheep Hear.

"I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. 2 The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep. 3 The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, **and his sheep follow him because they know his voice.** 5 But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice." 6 Jesus used this figure of speech, **but they did not understand** what he was telling them.

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- You do not persecute co-workers, a wife, a child, a friend – If you are against Christianity, you are against God.

Luke 11:23 – “He who is not with me is against Me, he who does not gather with me scatters abroad.”

1 Corinthians 16:22 – “If anyone does not love the Lord – a curse be on Him.” No middle ground!

Verse 5: Get up. Go. Listen. Obey.

Here is **deliverance** – Who are you, “Lord” - **κύριος**
He is Savior and Lord, not just Savior. Saul is starting off right. **Lord!** Many people want Him to be Savior without being Lord. That’s not possible. If He is Lord, He is also Savior. He is never Savior with being your Lord.

“Who are you?” People who are lost and people on the fringes do not recognize God’s voice. Who is speaking to me? Your first priority in life is to answer this question. God, who are you? Who is speaking to my heart? Philip asked the Eunuch, “Do you understand what you are reading?” The interview Jesus had with Nicodemus was an explanation of who Jesus is. That’s why Nicodemus came at night. He had to know who Jesus was. That query comes from the interest that the HS produces in the heart of the unbeliever. That question has to be answered in the heart of the lost. **When God draws, the soul becomes unsettled until truth answers the question... “Who are you, Lord?”**

~ This experience helped Saul know Jesus was Lord, even if He was not his Lord.

Philippians 3:4-11

⁴ though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵ circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard

to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless.

⁷ But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the **surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord**, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. ¹⁰ I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

* **Acts 9:5** - Saul did not know Jesus – In Philippians 3:8, he has a surpassing knowledge of Christ. Awesome!

Verse 6: Jesus identifies Himself with the same eternal description that Elohim gave Moses. The “I am” is given to Saul. The Greek word is a being verb that is not associated with time. This verb and the verbs in John 1 are from the **eimi** stem. Jesus, The Word, has always existed with God. The Word was in the beginning; the Word was with God; The Word was God. No start, no finish, just is.

God brings **direction** after the dropping and deliverance Saul is given a job. He is told what he will do.

* Those on the ground rarely negotiate with God.

God said get up, go, listen, obey. **Many new Christians get delivered from sin, but they never go, listen, and obey.**

Jesus says, "I'll tell you what your job is when you obey the first order to get up and go." What if Saul never went to Damascus?

Dei- δεῖ— He was told what was necessary for him to do.

Illustrated: John 4:4- “Jesus had to travel through Samaria.”
Saul was told here what he **must** do.

If your calling and purpose is never seen as a necessity, you will never accomplish what God has for you to do.

Verse 7:

The peer pressure you have been worried about... look at them now! Speechless. When God gets ahold of a sinner, even his friends will stand around and wonder what’s going on. Did they get saved? We don’t know, but they must have been stunned by what happened. They saw Saul change journeys. **Sometimes people close to the sinner change journeys too;** at other times, others stay on the same path. *When I changed journeys, I left a lot of people behind. You need to do the same.*

Verse 8:

From murderer to missionary. When God blinds a man, he loses **his** vision. Great humor in this. The murderer and bad dude is led by the hand into Damascus.

Submission comes from total humiliation.

Note: The most rebellious, prideful, and hateful people usually become the most productive, submissive, and obedient Christians.

Quote C.H. Spurgeon:

“Perhaps you are despising the very Savior you will one day love; trying to knock down the very thing that you will one day try to build up. Mayhap you are persecuting the men you will call your brothers and sisters.”

Do you see John Bunyan yonder? He is cursing God. He goes into the belfry and pulls the bell on Sunday, because he likes the bell-ringing, but when the church door is open, he is playing bowls upon the village green. There is the village tap, and there is no one that laughs so loud there as John Bunyan. There are some people

going to the meeting house; there is no one who curses them so much as John. He is a ringleader in all vices. If there is a hen roost to be robbed, Jack's your man. If there is any iniquity to be done, if there be any evil in the parish, you need not guess twice, John Bunyan is at the bottom of it.

But who is it now that stands there on the deck before the magistrate? Who is it I heard just now—"If you let me out of prison today, I will preach the gospel tomorrow, by the help of God?" Who was it that lay twelve years in prison, and when they said he might go out if he would promise not to preach, replied, "No, I will be here till the moss grows on mine eyelids, but I must and will preach God's gospel as soon as I have liberty?" Why, that is John Bunyan, the very man who cursed Christ the other day. A ringleader in vice has become the glorious dreamer, the very leader of God's hosts. See, what God did for him, and what God did for him he will do for you, if now you repent and seek the mercy of God in Christ Jesus.

Verse 9:

Not eating, drinking, or conversing is typical of God's presence. It's important that you understand that when God answers your prayers that you let God work. Don't get in the way.

* God's presence is so strong it can affect us physically.

Many have never been so humble as to experience God in this way. Most TV Evangelist and gospel prostitutes talk about feeling good and jumping up and down. It's all about them. Ask Saul what's on his mind right now? It isn't about himself. This is what godly sorrow, remorse, and repentance look like.

Grace never saved a good man.

Daniel had a similar reaction to a vision in Dan. 10 that had the same effects on Daniel. The spiritual always overrides the physical. The real workings of the Spirit in a devoted people's life

is contemplative and serious, not emotional and reckless. Saul was literally stopped in his tracks by the hound of heaven.

Joy comes after this!

III. Closing:

A word of Caution: Swindoll, Paul- p. 26... “It is impossible to find any single place in Scripture that reveals the one-and-only way every sinner comes to Christ. While the message of the Gospel is the same, methods differ. We are so conditioned by denominational backgrounds, religious traditionalism, and narrow-thinking prejudice, we miss the point of God's grace. We tend to require more than God does! Be careful about exacting requirements on someone who genuinely turns to Christ. Lost people are saved while listening to a great song about Christ, or while hearing a preacher or Bible teacher explain God's word from a pulpit or over television or on the radio. Others are saved during a small group Bible study. Many come to him on their own, while praying in the privacy of their homes. Day or night, a sinner can call on the Lord Jesus Christ in faith and be saved. Let's stop making it so complicated. As it happened with Saul, grace abounds. Regardless of exactly when Saul was converted, he realized that the living Jesus whom he had hated and denied his entire life, was now his Savior and Lord. It was in the dialogue that follows where he also learned the Lord had been there all along.”

In Acts 26, Paul gives us a bit more information about his conversation with Jesus as he recounts his conversion to Festus. Paul tells us that God was goading him and he was kicking against the goads. A goad was a sharp stick used to push cattle or sheep in the right direction. This is what we call a cattle prod today.

What were these goads?

Paul had seen the life, works, and miracles of Jesus. At least he had heard of them. He saw the apostles and deacons doing miracles.

He saw the death of Stephan and could not understand why he forgave the very people that killed him. He was at peace when he died.

The prisoners he took to the death were courageous and faithful till the end. The witness of the martyrs.

C. S. Lewis compares God to a divine chess player. He always wins. God's making moves in your life to get you on the right journey with Jesus, Stop kicking the goads.