

Lord, What Wilt Thou Have Me To Do?

- A. Paul's primary conversion experience is recorded for us in **ACT 9:1-9**.
1. **conversion**: I. Turning in position, direction, destination. II. Change in character, nature, form, or function. The bringing of any one over to a specified religious faith, profession, or party, esp. to one regarded as true, from what is regarded as falsehood or error. *Theol.* The turning of sinners to God; a spiritual change from sinfulness, ungodliness or worldliness to love of God and pursuit of holiness.
 - a. Such conversion requires the Law of God. **PSA 19:7**.
 - b. Paul had been born into a monotheistic society that believed their God was the only true God the Creator.
 - c. Paul was trained up in the most zealous sect of that religion. **ACT 26:4-5**.
 - d. Paul lived a very principled life, technically blameless and with a good conscience. **PHIL 3:6; ACT 23:1**.
 - e. Paul's conversion was not one of an idol-worshipping heathen nor of a debauched, flesh-pleasing reprobate but of a serious religious man who was doing what he thought was pleasing to his God. **ACT 26:9**.
 2. *Conversion* is a process that happens throughout the life of God's saints and it is connected with repentance. **ACT 3:19**.
 - a. It is not the same as *regeneration*, which is a miraculous creation of a new heart and spirit in man by the sovereign act of God once and in a moment. **JOH 1:12-13**.
 - b. Those who are regenerated will at various times still need conversion. **LUK 22:32; JAM 5:19-20**.
 3. Paul had a very dramatic and life changing experience on the road to Damascus where he met his Lord and Savior and saw the light.
 - a. Heretofore in religious zeal he was "...breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord..." (**ACT 9:1**).
 - b. Heretofore he was one of that type from whom David prayed for deliverance. **PSA 27:12**.
 - c. Heretofore he was as leviathan (**JOB 41:21**), serpentine and dragon-like. **ISA 27:1**.
 4. He was persecuting Jesus' disciples, which Jesus took personally, and he was rebelling against his master, as Jesus told him when stated, "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks" (**ACT 9:5**).
 - a. **prick**: Anything that goads or pierces; an instrument or organ having a sharp point....A goad for oxen. *to kick (work, spurn) against the pricks*.
 - b. **goad**: A rod or stick, pointed at one end or fitted with a sharp spike and employed for driving cattle, esp. oxen used in ploughing.
 - (1) This is how meek and gentle Jesus sometimes directs ministers, who are likened to oxen. **1CO 9:9-10**.
 - (2) When an animal is kicking against the prick or goad of its master it is rebelling against his master's instructions or the direction and speed he wishes him to go.
 - (3) Christ has various means by which He pricks His ministers: affliction, chastening, conviction by the truth. etc. David felt these and it straightened out his furrow. **PSA 51:12-13**.
 5. Paul had heard the truth at Stephen's mock trial as Stephen preached the truth about Israel's history and abuse of God's prophets, including the greatest of prophets, God's

Son, the Just One, and Paul had rejected the truth. **ACT 7:51-60; 8:1.**

- a. Paul was going in the wrong direction, rebelling against truth, kicking against the pricks.
 - b. His heart may have been pricked by the truth (per **ACT 2:37**) but hardened against it and "...past feeling..." (**EPH 4:19**).
6. Now Paul's response to Jesus' words to him was that he came under conviction, changing his mind concerning his former behavior, and asking the Lord, trembling and astonished, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (**ACT 9:6**). c/w **ACT 2:37**.
- a. conviction: *Theol.* The fact or condition of being convicted or convinced of sin. **under conviction(s)**: in the state of awakened consciousness of sin.
 - b. This is evident in the response, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" That is the proper response of a soul under conviction. Paul came to the sudden realization that Jesus was Lord as he heard the very voice of Christ alive and speaking to him.
 - (1) Mind that one does not need to audibly hear the voice of Christ to be convicted of sin and convinced that He is Lord.
 - (2) The written and preached word of God suffices since it is as the voice of the Author. See **ACT 13:27**.
 - c. It is obvious that Paul had a change of mind regarding his former behavior and was now willing to do what Jesus told him to do.
 - (1) This conviction or state of awakened consciousness of sin is reflected in the words of **ROM 7:9**.
 - (2) This is the commandment coming to the conscious mind which heretofore had buried it under Pharisaism and law-works righteousness.
 - (3) It is a death similar to what Nabal and Isaiah experienced. **1SAM 25:37; ISA 6:1-5**.
7. In reply to Paul's question, Jesus said, "...Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do" (**ACT 9:6**).
- a. Jesus sent a preacher named Ananias to tell him what he wanted him to do as He told Paul he would. **ACT 22:12-16; 26:16-20**.
 - (1) Jesus did not send him a philosopher, seminary or a deacon board.
 - (2) Sinners are brought to faith by preachers. **ROM 10:13-17**.
 - (3) Preachers are taught and fitted by preachers. **2TI 2:2**.
 - b. Note carefully **ACT 26:19**. Paul did as He was told to do by Jesus and the preacher Ananias. He meant what he said and followed through with it.
 - c. Not all that come under conviction act upon that conviction as Paul did, and others act upon it but only for a while and do not fully follow Jesus. **JOH 6:60-66**.
 - d. Having the will to do right is noble but inadequate. God works in His children "...both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (**PHIL 2:13**).
 - e. Those who say they will but do not are NOT doing God's will. **MAT 21:28-31**.
 - f. Those who say they will but only upon their own terms are not fit for the kingdom of God. **LUK 9:57-62**.
- B. Note the elements present in Paul's conviction and conversion.
1. God shined a light round about Paul and Paul saw the light.
 2. God spoke and addressed something wrong in Paul's life and Paul came under conviction.
 3. God spake as Paul's master and Lord and was received as such by Paul.
 4. Paul assumed a humble posture and attitude before God.
 5. Paul received the admonition without any resistance, argument, self-justification, or self-will.

6. He rather submitted himself fully to the will of God.
 7. He received further instructions and baptism from a man of God.
 8. He obeyed what he was told to do both by Christ and the man of God.
- C. Most convictions and subsequent conversions are not as dramatic as Paul's was but the elements will be present in genuine conversions.
1. For a conversion to Jesus as Lord and obedience to Him you need light and you need to see the light.
 2. First of all, Jesus Himself is light. When He appeared to Paul and spake to him, Paul saw a light "...above the brightness of the sun" (**ACT 26:13**).
 - a. Note: The Son's light is brighter than the sun's light. If you are going to worship the Son, make sure it is not connected with the worship of the sun. Worship the brighter light.
 - b. The sun is obviously the lesser light and lesser light *rules darkness*. **GEN 1:16**.
 - (1) Those who worship nature's life-force (essentially all pagan religion is sun worship) are in spiritual darkness. They are spiritual *children of the night*. They worship the creation rather than the Creator and the result is played out in their moral code. **ROM 1:25-26**.
 - (2) By contrast, true worshippers of the true God are spiritual *children of the day* and of true light. **1TH 5:5-9**.
 - c. This is no flippant or moot point. The mingling together of elements of pagan sun worship with Biblical Son worship provokes God to jealousy. **1CO 10:20-22**.
 - (1) Sunbursts, green trees, wreaths, obelisks, maypoles, etc., are emblems or pictures of the false god of creature-worship.
 - (2) The church is supposed to be espoused to Christ as His chaste virgin. **2CO 11:2**.
 - (3) What husband would not be angered and jealous if his wife could not be intimate with him without pictures of other lovers stapled to the headboard?
 - d. Light can have no communion with darkness. **2CO 6:14**.
 - e. Genuine conversion involves a change of creed as well as conduct!
 3. Jesus Christ is the true light in this dark world. **JOH 8:12**.
 - a. When you meet Jesus, you meet light.
 - b. When you follow Jesus, you no longer walk in darkness but you have light.
 - c. When you believe on Jesus you come out of darkness into light. **JOH 12:46; EPH 5:8**.
 4. The gospel of Jesus, which gives us the basic knowledge of Jesus (that He is the Son of God who died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures), is described as *a light shining in our hearts*. **2CO 4:4-6**.
 - a. This gospel was first shined into the hearts of the apostles by the Holy Ghost directly. **JOH 14:26; 2PE 1:19**.
 - b. They in turn gave that light to others through preaching. **1PE 1:12; TIT 1:3**.
 - c. This is the gospel ministry, manifesting the truth about Jesus to the consciences of men.
 - d. As Paul, we preach Christ Jesus the Lord and tell who He is, what He did, where He is now, and what He demands of men. We give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God as found in the face of Jesus Christ.
 - e. The true gospel gives all the glory to God through the work of Jesus Christ and bestowed upon us according to God's mercy and grace (**EPH 2:8-9**). It is the light of the glory of God, NOT the glory of man.

5. This preaching of the gospel as servants of Christ is what Jesus commissioned His servants to do and teach for the conversion and obedience of men to Himself. **MAT 28:18-20.**
 - a. Any true conversion includes the knowledge that Jesus is Lord and God that he died for our sins, was buried and rose again and is now reigning over all, and that we thus have a duty to obey Him.
 - b. Note that Jesus states *His authority first*. **MAT 28:18.**
 - c. “Go ye therefore...” (**vs. 19-20**) and teach these facts, baptizing those that believe it in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.
 - (1) This baptism joins one into the kingdom of God. **LUK 7:29; MAT 21:31.**
 - (2) The convert thus becomes a citizen of a spiritual nation and under the authority of Jesus Christ, its King. **1PE 2:9.**
 - (3) The ministers of that kingdom then instruct them what else Christ commands that they observe.
 - d. Paul heard the truth about Jesus from Stephen. Now he believed it as that very person Jesus spoke to him and he was ready to obey whatever Christ willed.
6. We do not experience personal confrontations and conversations with Christ as Paul did but we do have his words to us in the Scriptures. **HEB 1:1-3.**
 - a. The written word of God which is the testimony of Jesus *about* Him (O.T. and the four gospels), and *from* Him (N.T. epistles) which reveals His commands to us as believers, is also called *light*. **PSA 119:105, 130.**
 - b. It is sufficient for full obedience to Him. **2TI 3:16-17.**
 - c. No extra-biblical “light” is needed. **ISA 8:20.**
7. If God is who He says He is in his word (e.g. **ISA 43:10-11**), and Scripture is truly the word of God, it then speaks with the authority of God and is to be received as such.
 - a. If you do not believe you have the word of God, or if you don’t receive it as the true (i.e. pure and preserved) word of God, it will not work effectually in you. **1TH 2:13-14.**
 - b. It may work partially or for a while but you will always have an excuse to disobey.
 - (1) You will internally reason, “Yeah, hath God said...?” (**GEN 3:1**).
 - (2) You may well think, “Maybe another version will give me a reading more to my liking, because I don’t like what it says in the KJV.”
 - (3) Multiple differing versions = Wiggle Room = Make Up My Own Religion.
8. To be converted, one must have a humble spirit and reverence for the word of God for such is the one that gets the grace to receive it and act upon it without resistance, arguments, self-justification or self-will rearing its ugly head. **1PE 5:5-6; ISA 57:15; 66:2 c/w 1CO 15:9-10.**
 - a. We know Paul was from his reaction to the words of Christ and his subsequent words regarding it. **1TI 1:12-15.**
 - b. Genuine conversion is impossible for someone whose arrogance forbids him from considering that God has preserved His word through translations and copies. He will be at best, “Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (**2TI 3:7**).
9. In conversion, a sinner is convicted and sees the error of his way and the truth he must acknowledge and follow.
 - a. It is the Holy Spirit that convicts man of sin. **JOH 16:8.**
 - b. It is called a *pricking of the heart*. **ACT 2:36-37.**
 - (1) prick: fig. To cause sharp mental pain to; to sting with sorrow or remorse; to grieve, pain, torment, vex.

- (2) remorse: A feeling of compunction, or of deep regret and repentance, for a sin or wrong committed.
- c. Men fight against the pricking of the heart by hardening it against the rebuke or instruction of the word of God. **HEB 3:7-8; ACT 7:51.**
 - d. The word of God, which is the word of the Spirit, in its written form or from the mouth of a preacher is as a goad, a pointed instrument, that admonishes and rebukes where needed. **2PE 1:21; ECC 12:9-12.**
 - e. You are to obey the man of God when he comes with the word of God for He speaks for Christ. **2CO 5:20; HEB 13:7, 17.**
10. When you are convicted by the word of God and the Holy Spirit that dwells within you, how do you respond?
- a. As Paul did?
 - b. Or as James writes in **JAM 1:21-25**?
 - c. Or God forbid, as Paul writes of in **HEB 10:26-31**?
- D. What is it that the Lord would have you to do?
1. At times He has asked some hard things of His children.
 - a. Consider Abraham. **GEN 22:1-12.**
 - b. Consider Paul. **ACT 9:15-16 c/w 2CO 11:23-33.**
 - c. Consider Job and the other prophets. **JAM 5:10-11.**
 2. Sometimes his children do not ask the question or submit willingly to God's will for them. **JON 1:1-3.**
 3. God's will for you is first of all to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, repent, be baptized, become part of His church, and continue in the apostles doctrine. **ACT 2:36-42.**
 4. God's will then for you is to continue learning and observing what Christ commands you to do. **MAT 28:18-20.**
 - a. Some things done in the name of Christ are not what Christ would have you to do. **MAT 7:21-23.**
 - b. Regardless of what Christ requires of others, the issue is what would He have YOU to do? **JOH 21:22.**
 5. Your calling or station in life will determine the some of the answers to this question.
 - a. If one is a pastor, there are things God requires him to do that are not required of others. **1TI 4:13-16; 2TI 2:3, 15; 4:1-2; 1PE 5:1-3.**
 - b. If one is a husband and/or a father, there are certain things that Christ would have you do. **EPH 6:4; 5:25-33; 1PE 3:7.**
 - c. If you are a child, there are certain things that Christ would have you to do. **EPH 6:1-3.**
 - d. If one is a wife and and/or mother, there are certain things Christ would have you do. **1PE 3:1-6; EPH 5:22-23; 1TI 5:14.**
 - e. There are instructions given to servants and masters or employers and employees. **EPH 6:5-9.**
 - f. There are instructions given to civil servants and the military. **LUK 3:12-14.**
 - g. There are also general instructions given to all of God's children. **1PE 3:8-12; EPH 4:20-32.**
 6. What is it that the Lord would have *you* to do? Ans. Whatever His word teaches you to do, and whatever His word convicts you that you need to change and start doing.
 - a. The time for this is the moment of realization without delay, as with Paul. **HEB 3:15; PSA 119:60.**
 - b. This how one works out *his own* salvation. **PHIL 2:12-13.**

- E. God does not demand anything harder of His saints than what He has demanded of Himself for His love for us. **JOH 3:16; 1JO 4:9-10 c/w GEN 22:1-3.**
1. God asked the hardest thing of His own Son.
 - a. He asked Him to take upon Himself the guilt of all God's elect children and suffer all the wrath of God that those sins deserved in the inward torments of Gethsemane and the outward agony of the cross.
 - b. And Jesus did it for His love of His God and Father and His love for us.
MAT 26:36-42; MAR 14:36.
 - c. Thankfully He was an Abraham and not a Jonah.
 - d. His life and death manifested the question and the answer, "What wilt thou have me to do? I come to do thy will and please thee rather than myself."
HEB 10:7-9; JOH 8:29.
 2. It is because of Christ's submission to that question that we have eternal life as the gift of God's grace. **ROM 6:23.**