

Paul's Conversion

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- [0 : 0 0] The book of Acts chapter 22. We shall read from verse 8, Acts 22 at the 8th verse.
- And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou percute.
- And those that were with me saw indeed the light and were afraid. But I heard not the voice of him that spoke to me. And I said, What shall I do, Lord?
- And the Lord said unto me, Arise and go into Damascus. And there shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.
- Especially the first part of the 8th and the first part of the 10th. But who art thou, Lord?
- [1 : 2 1] What shall I do, Lord? Who art thou? And what shall I do?
- It will be allowed, of course, by all that the conversion of all of Tartus There was a very important factor in the early history of the young.
- And this we say is allowed by both the friends and the foes of the gods. The story is told of two learned Catholics who took it upon themselves to prove that Christianity was false.
- So each one was to take a topic and examine it and so how far it was. And of course with such an ending use they chose topics that went through the very heart of the young.
- One was to create the of West of Amsterdam or the North. He was to gather all that he could about it and then set it forth in such a way to prove that it was nothing better than an old wise faith.
- [3 : 3 0] And the other was to take the conversion of Paul of Saul the conversion of Saul of Tartus and show that there was nothing in his conversion if there had been such a thing nothing but hallucination.
- you are aware of course that sceptics ancient and modern have not hesitated to say that on his way to Damascus that Saul of Tartus must have something like an epileptic fit or something like that.
- That is a favorite explanation of the radical change that took place in his life. But these two men who had set themselves out to prove that the resurrection was false and that there was nothing in the conversion of Saul but hallucinations as they delved into the matter they became more and more doubtful of their scepticism.
- And after prolonged study they both came to the conclusion that both the resurrection of the Lord and the conversion of Paul were not able but facts and both ended by preaching the faith which they once tried to destroy.
- The minds of the words those who came to scoff turned aside to pray.
- [5 : 3 3] all of which bears out what we have said that the conversion of Saul of Tarsus is an important factor in the early history of Christianity.
- Now we have three accounts of that conversion in the book of Acts and some of you may have been perplexed with the verbal differences in the accounts.

For instance in the ninth chapter where Luke gives his conversion we read that we read in the seventh verse and the men which journeyed with him stood speechless hearing a voice but seeing no man hearing a voice but seeing no man and here we read and they that were with me saw indeed the light and were afraid but they heard not the voice of him that speak to me in the ninth chapter we read they that were with me heard the voice and here we read they heard not the voice that speak to me of course there is no disagreement there far less a contradiction we have something similar to this in the twelfth chapter of the gospel according to

John we read there that Jesus prayed saying father glorify thy name and a voice came from heaven saying I have both glorified it and will glorify it again and some of those who stood by said it thundered others said an angel speak to him how could they say that it thundered because of course they heard a noise but they didn't understand the words that were spoken and that is precisely what Paul here means when he says they heard not the voice that is they understood not what was said they knew not if anything had been said they heard a noise and that is what he means here when he says they heard the voice that is they heard the noise but they didn't hear the words that I heard so when he says they heard it he means of course that they heard the noise when Luke says that they didn't hear it he means that they didn't understand what was said that's all we have always to bear in mind that the Bible is literature it is not a textbook of geometry it is literature sacred literature true literature but literature we don't find the same we don't find different accounts of the same matter given in exactly the same words of course not because the writer is free and he chooses the part of the incidents which he records that he did the purpose he has in hand why did

Paul in one place say for instance that this happened and another place emphasized something entirely different why because of course the circumstances were different the situation the situations were different he wanted to emphasize more certain aspects at one time than he did at other times the Bible is literature but perhaps we approach it thinking that everything should be said in the same words and that all the words should be used over and over again that's not the way the spirit works at all but all the accounts are equally true all the words are equally inspired nevertheless we do get accounts of the same thing that differ that differ in their phraseology that differ in their emphasis but it would be the height of nonsense to say that because they differ in that way that there is a disagreement far less a contradiction between them this then is what we have of the facts of the conversion of Paul but there is one thing in which there is no difference and that is the very wording of the first question which all of Tarsus asks when the light shone round about him brighter than the light of the sun when he heard the voice saying

[12:11] Saul Saul why persecute us thou me his immediate response is who art thou Lord who are them in safety he is not seeking for any credentials the brightness of the light and the power of the voice makes him thoroughly convinced one but whoever this is is one who has divine power and divine authority who is this of the greatness and the glory of the person he has no room for doubt now if the answer had come

I am the Lord of glory that is precisely what Paul would have expected if the answer had come I am Jehovah the God of Israel that would be in keeping with the precedence of the case but it is impossible for us to realize the shock that Paul's whole system received when he heard the words not I am the Lord of glory not I am Jehovah but I am Jesus of Nazareth I am

Jesus of Nazareth this very name which was despised this very name which was everywhere spoken against that is the name that comes out from the excellent glory I am Jesus of Nazareth in a sense from that shock Saul of Tarsus never recovered this is what changed the whole current of his life and we certainly do grave prejudice to the account of his conversion if we forget this aspect of shock which it had for him as he heard the name

Jesus of Master he remember himself mentioning in another place I thought within myself that I ought to do many things against this name this name had been cast out as evil it had been trodden under Jesus of Nazareth this is the one who had been done to death for presuming to say that he was the son of God this is the one who had been condemned by the Sanhedrin on the charge of blasphemy and with that condemnation

Saul of Tarsus was in full agreement that's why he says I thought within myself that I ought to do many things all that he could against his name he was more salous than his contemporaries for the traditions of his fathers and here his intellectual acumen comes to the fore even here we see it in what he was persuaded beyond all others at least beyond all others of whom we have a crowd he was persuaded beyond all others that there was a fundamental cleavage between the tradition of the fathers and christianity as taught by christ and the apostles not a cleavage in the sense of separation but he saw from the very beginning that the continuation of the ceremonial law and the preaching of jesus of nazareth were incompatible he saw that as a pharisee and certainly he saw it and saw it more and more clearly as an apostle that is why you find his polemic against the judaizer his argument against those who would mix law and gospel that's why you find his polemic so sharp in some points we might say a bit fiat he has absolutely no compassion for the concision none whatsoever he realizes that there is a basic incompatibility between justification by law and justification by grace and he knew that from the beginning and that is one of the reasons his mental clarity his intellectual insight why he was so bitter against this name he saw and saw clearly that justification by works and justification by grace were utterly and basically incompatible no when he hears the word

[20 : 29] I am Jesus of Nazareth and when the charge is added whom thou persecutest that of course before all time broke the ground broke the backbone of his legalism that for all time took the ground from under his feet as to his confidence in his works for his justification for his salvation this was the first blow it received at least the first effective one I am

Jesus of Nazareth whom thou persecutest and of course the reaction is so wonderful but it is given in such a way that we are apt to overlook it the next time Saul of Tartars addresses Jesus of Nazareth he addresses him knowingly as Lord when he said who art thou Lord he didn't know who this was he didn't know what answer he was to receive he was conscious of the brilliance of the light and he was still reeling under the power of the voice who art thou

I am Jesus of Nazareth then he he speaks what shall I do Lord he whose name was cast out as evil is now addressed as Lord and Saul knew what he was saying many people addressed him Jesus as Lord and they don't know what is that was not the case with Saul of Tarsus the word has all its meaning every shade of its meaning and this is the word that is used in the New Testament to translate the dread name

Jehovah in the Old Testament who art thou Lord he didn't know then but when he spoke again he knew that he was addressing Jesus of Nassau what wilt thou have me to do what shall I do Lord know that what is important among other things in this incident is the order of the questions not merely the questions themselves but their order who are them what shall I do remember the who comes before the what what has to be determined first of all is the identity of the speaker the identity of

Jesus who he is what he is who are thou now most people start at the wrong end without asking the question who are thou they become preoccupied with the other one what shall I do that is very natural indeed what shall I do tell me what I shall do let me go on and do something oh that's human nature all over that's the way reasons have it high give us a program give us something to do that's not the order of scripture what has first of all to be definitely settled and settled for all time and for all eternity is who are now we know that no man can say that

[26 : 03] Jesus Christ is Lord but through the Holy Ghost no man can say that Jesus Christ is Lord but through the Holy Ghost people may profess what they like but they cannot in their heart that is they cannot truly say that Christ is Lord but through the Holy Ghost he must be revealed from heaven the glory of his person in some measure must shine into the heart the confession or the first part of the confession of the true believer is the Son of the Living God the Savior of the lost the

Lord the Messiah thou art the King of Israel who are them now that question must be settled before we come on to the next one what shall I do happen how have you settled this question or rather has it been settled for you in your own mind who are thou has the voice ever come from the excellent glory I am Jesus of nothing but more than that we have to follow the order here usually the full title of the

Savior is the full title that's given in the scripture I mean is the Lord Jesus Christ the Lord Jesus Christ that is a wonderful title in itself surpassingly wonderful the Lord Jesus Christ and when the scriptures use the term Lord in that connection it is to show for the complete Lordship of Jesus Christ his absolute Lordship he reigns over all but you see as we approach this title and as we approach the person who is titled the race we have to follow the order no

Paul wasn't for a moment to be as of the Lordship of Christ once he spoke to him from heaven that is the way he addresses him first of all Lord Lord nor was he dubious about his authority that is that he had arrived to say what he said that he had all power all authority and that's what we have in the word Christ as you know the word Christ means anointed one he who set apart to a certain office to accomplish a certain work that is Christ as we had occasion to point out more than once Christ is not a proper name that is not the name of a person it's a title it's the

Messiah it's the Greek form of the term Messiah Messiah is Hebrew and the Christ is the Greek form of the same word meaning the anointed one that's why you have in the translation you have the definite article with the word Christ the what the Christ the what the anointed one the one set apart set apart by whom by the Lord God Almighty so that Lord he knows power Lordship Christ denotes authority that is that he has a right to do what he does and Jesus is the personal name and as you know

[31 : 43] Jesus means saviour saviour the saviour who has all authority and power Jesus Christ the saviour all authority and all power in heaven and honour now coming into contact with this power and recognising this authority the question arises who is this who is it who has this power and this authority who but Jesus of Nazareth the lonely Jesus who was born in a low condition his humiliation consists in this that he was born and that in an low condition made under the law undergoing the mysteries of this land this is

Jesus he who was born in a low condition he who took bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh because the children were partakers of flesh and blood he likewise also took part of the same and in doing so was born in a low condition made under the law undergoing the mysteries of this life the wrath of God and the cursed death of the cross who was bent and continued under the power of death all the time this is the historic the historic Jesus this is the Jesus of history this is the Jesus of revelation this is the

Jesus of faith I am Jesus I am a savior and my lordship and my authority I use to this end he is lord he is Christ that he may be Jesus our savior able to save for the uttermost all who come unto God by him I am Jesus I am the savior of the lost the shepherd of the sheep who lay down his life that the sheep might live that they might be gathered into one fold into one flock and glorified together without spot or anchor or any such thing I am

Jesus I am the savior and this is the most blessed word that heaven itself has to speak to us in the sweetest word that can be spoken to us in and as such I am Jesus I am the savior who are the I am the savior as your own soul heard maybe in very tender accents that's how it would be heard in any kiss maybe even in an whisper as your own soul ever heard these words I am Jesus I am the savior able to save to the uttermost

I am this and then of course if you have the immediate response of the whole being is this what will I do Lord what will I do because the people the church of God is saved not by good works but unto good works what will I do that's the language of gratitude that is the language of subjection that is the language of one who has been subdued subdued to Jesus recognizing him as the Lord of his life and the disposer of his destiny who are now what shall

[37 : 32] I do see that you will keep these questions in that order the who before the what don't get into the morass of doing without knowing who you are sir this is the sweetness of the service that it is service to him who is Jesus doing this day for to us to lose them as do