

The Personal Pentecost of Paul

Chapter Six

Audio lesson: New Testament 36



Objective: To learn about Paul's encounter with Jesus and understand the mission God called him to fulfill.



"I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you. I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me."

—Acts 26:16-18

Saul, also known as Paul, had an unusual encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus. We cannot explain this apostle apart from that experience. It was the turning point in his life that shaped his future and the future of the church. This experience is described several times in the book of Acts, twice by Paul when he was on trial.

Paul had been a Christ-hater and had been persecuting Christians, but when Jesus appeared to him, the Lord asked, "Why are you persecuting me?" Paul did not even know who he was talking to, so he asked, "Who are you, Lord?" In this conversion experience, the wildness of Saul was transformed to the "tame"ness of Paul. Paul accepted the control of the Lord's "bit and bridle." He became a different man who was humble and teachable.

Later in Paul's letters, he would explain all that God has done for us in giving us salvation through Jesus. But when he first met Jesus, his question was not, "What are you going to do for me?" He asked, "Lord, what do you want me to do?"

After his experience on the Damascus road, Paul was led to a man named Ananias who would baptize him. God showed Ananias his future plans for Paul—that he would be a chosen instrument to take the gospel first to Jews and then to Gentiles and their kings. When Ananias learned that this enemy of the church had been converted, he considered Paul a brother because he understood the power of the gospel: that the grace of God changes lives.

1. **True** or false? When Saul first appears in the book of Acts, he is a Christ-hater and an enemy of the church.
2. True or **false**? Saul's conversion was based entirely on an intellectual understanding of the gospel, not on experience.
3. **True** or false? Jesus accused Saul of persecuting Him, not just the church.

4. True or **false**? Saul’s anger against the church was a sign that the Holy Spirit was not working in him at all.



Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

5. How did Jesus respond to Saul’s hatred of Him?
- a. He vowed never to let Saul into His kingdom.
 - b. He punished Saul by making him sick.
 - c. He protected His followers from Saul so that no believer would ever suffer because of him.
 - d. He appeared to Saul in order to convince him of truth and call him to ministry.**
6. What question did Jesus ask Saul?
- a. “Why are you persecuting me?”**
 - b. “Why are you so zealous?”
 - c. “How long have you been traveling on this road?”
 - d. “Would you consider volunteering for a mission?”
7. What question did Saul ask Jesus?
- a. “How did the resurrection actually happen?”
 - b. “Who are you, Lord?”**
 - c. “What does the parable of the Prodigal Son mean?”
 - d. “What is heaven like?”
8. What is most important about someone’s “personal Pentecost”—their encounter with God?
- a. How they made it happen
 - b. The details of the experience
 - c. The results of the experience**
 - d. Whether other people approve of their experience

9. Why should we do good works?
- a. In order to impress others
 - b. In order to be saved
 - c. Because we are saved**
 - d. We should not do good works at all because salvation comes by faith.
10. What happened to Paul's values when he met Jesus?
- a. They turned upside down so that what he once valued became unimportant and what he did not value became extremely important.**
 - b. Jesus became his highest value, but everything else stayed the same.
 - c. They did not change at all.
 - d. He began to value his heritage and his credentials even more.
11. What did God show Ananias to convince him to baptize Paul?
- a. All of Ananias' past sins, to remind him of his obligation to God
 - b. The angels who would be protecting Ananias from Paul's threats
 - c. The punishment Ananias would receive if he did not obey
 - d. God's future plans for Paul**



Have you, like Paul, ever asked this question: "Lord, what do you want me to do?" If so, how has God responded to your question? If not, is there any reason you would not ask Him now?



Thank God that He has a plan for your life. Ask Him what He wants you to do in order to fulfill His purpose for your life. Pray that He would bear much fruit through your life as you serve Him.



Going Deeper

1. What do you think about, and how are you to personally apply, the *road to Damascus experience* of Paul? _____

2. Since the most important part of a spiritual experience is the results of the experience rather than its details, what were the results of Paul's experience and how are we to apply them to ourselves? _____

3. While you are answering this second question, how do you personally apply the passage in Philippians 3: 7-17, where Paul describes this experience in terms of the results of this experience? _____

4. What is the application for us from the reality that Saul of Tarsus seemed to be the hard case and the most impossible person to be converted to Christ, yet he was arguably the greatest missionary of the church? _____

5. Since we cannot explain all of the life and ministry of the Apostle Paul apart from the word experience, by application do you believe in experiential Christianity? _____

6. Have you had any experiences on your faith journey, do you seek experiences, and how do you seek them? _____

7. Jesus taught us to ask, seek and knock our way through to knowing God. What does the example of the Apostle Paul teach us about knowing God? _____
