

From Saul To Paul

An unexpected conversion

Appearance of Lord; blindness...

1 Tim. 1:16, pattern for us?

We do not experience miracles

1. They vary
2. They are incidental

Acts 8, 9, 10

All met same conditions

Acts 8, 9, 10

Most unusual conversion: Saul of Tarsus,
greatest enemy of the church

I. Paul's Teaching

Paul's epistles

¹⁵ and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you,

¹⁶ as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures – 2 Peter 3

Paul's epistles (I)

Book	Date	Address	Derivation	References
1 Th.	49-51	Thes. ch.	Corinth	Ac.18:4-5
2 Th.	49-51	Thes. ch.	Corinth	Ac.18:4-5
1 Co.	53-55	Cor. ch.	Ephesus	Ac.19:22; 1 Co.16:8
2 Co.	55-56	Cor. ch.	Macedonia	Ac.20:1-2; 2 Co.2, 7
Ro.	57	Ro. ch.	Corinth	Ac.20:2; Ro.16:1
Gal.	?	Gal. ch's	?	Ac.20:2?

Paul's epistles (II)

Book	Date	Address	Derivation	References
Eph.	62	Eph.	Rome	Ac.28; Ep.3:1; 4:1; 6:20-22
Col.	62	Col.	Rome	Col.4:7-9
Phm.	62	Phm.	Rome	Phm.1:1, 9-10
Phil.	62	Phil.	Rome	Ph.1:13-14, 19; 4:22
1 Tim.	62-64	Timothy	?	1 T.1:3
Titus	62-64	Titus	Nicopolis	Tit.3:12
2 Tim.	64-67	Timothy	Rome	2 T.1:8; 4:6-8

Baur accepted four as genuine

- Galatians, 1-2 Corinthians, Romans
- His followers later accepted all except Ephesians and 'pastorals'

Deissmann

“That a portion of these confidential letters should be still extant after centuries, St. Paul cannot have intended, nor did it ever occur to him that they would be.”

1 Co.1:2, all churches (14:37).

Paul wrote Scripture

1 Co.1:2 – To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

1 Co.14:37 – If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord.

I. Paul's Teaching

II. Paul's Travels

Paul's zeal to spread good news

- **First:** Ac.13-14. [13:50: persecution.]
- **Second:** Ac.15:36-18:22.
- **Third:** Ac.18:23-21:17.

Afar off,
Ac.2:39

Saul,
Ac.22:21

I. Paul's Teaching

II. Paul's Travels

III. Paul's Testimony

Testimony to resurrection of Christ

- **Saul:** unbeliever [Jesus is imposter]
 - Ac.7:52, 54, 57-60
 - Ac.8:1, Saul approved; 3, sought more

Testimony to resurrection of Christ

- **Saul:** unbeliever [Jesus is imposter]
 - **Why did Saul change?**
1. **Historical account:** Ac.9:1-2, 3-5, 6...13f.
 - Ac.9:18, eye condition
 - Ac.9:22, confounded Jews, proving this Jesus is the Christ

Testimony to resurrection of Christ

- **Saul:** unbeliever [Jesus is imposter]
- **Why did Saul change?**
 1. Historical account: Ac.9:1-2, 3-5, 6...
 2. Appeal to Jews: 21:40 (Aramaic)
 - Why did I change?
 - 22:3, Gamaliel; zealous
 - 22:4, *to the death...men and women*
 - 22:21, Gentiles

Testimony to resurrection of Christ

- **Saul:** unbeliever [Jesus is imposter]
- **Why did Saul change?**
 1. Historical account: Ac.9:1-2, 3-5, 6...
 2. Appeal to Jews: 21:40 (Aramaic)
 3. Political defense to Romans: 26
 - 26:2, contrasts himself and Jews
 - 26:9-11, tried to shut down Christians

Testimony to resurrection of Christ

- **Saul:** unbeliever [Jesus is imposter]
- **Paul: radical change.** Ac.9:20-21; 14:19-20
 1. Lord appeared to him, 1 Co.9:1; 15:8, 11.
 2. His preaching, Gal.1:11-12
 - His past, 13
 - His progress, 14
 - His penitence, 15-17
 3. Grace, mercy, 1 Tim.1:12-14

What was Paul's motive?

- Lord George Lyttleton (d. 1773), Oxford...
- 1747: *Observations of the Conversion of St. Paul*
- Lyttleton and Gilbert West agreed to research two key points...with the aim of proving them false:
 - **Lyttleton:** Saul of Tarsus was never really converted to Christianity
 - **West:** Jesus never really rose from the dead

The results (1747)

“Sir, in a late conversation we had together upon the subject of the Christian religion, I told you that besides all the proofs of it which may be drawn from the prophecies of the Old Testament, from the necessary connection it has with the whole system of the Jewish religion, from the miracles of Christ, and from the evidence given of his reflection by all the other apostles, I thought the conversion and apostleship of Saint Paul alone, duly considered, was of itself a demonstration sufficient to prove Christianity a divine revelation.”

McClintock and Strong

This argument itself constitutes “a demonstration sufficient to prove Christianity to be a divine revelation.”

Lyttleton argued that Paul was **not** . . .

1. Imposter who lied; no motive to suffer for lie
2. Enthusiast, but a disciplined scholar of first magnitude
3. Deceived by fraud of others

Only four possible options

1. Paul intentionally deceived people with lies and false claims.

For what motives?

Wealth?

Fame?

Power?

Comfort?

Sensuality?

Would he suffer so much or work so hard for a lie? 1 Co.9:16; 15:10; 2 Co.11

Only four possible options

1. Paul intentionally deceived people with lies and false claims.
2. Paul suffered from hallucinations.

What produced them?

Why did they continue for life?

How to explain his . . .

miraculous signs? (2 Co.12:12)

letters? Require lifetime of study

Only four possible options

1. Paul intentionally deceived people with lies and false claims.
2. Paul suffered from hallucinations.

3. Paul was victim of deception by others.

Who could make Jesus appear from heaven? ...speak? ...inform of Ananias? ...predict his future service? ...allow companions to see same light, hear...?

What motive? (Ac.9)

Christians could not, Jews would not

Why die for a lie? ...die without recanting?

Only four possible options

1. Paul intentionally deceived people with lies and false claims.
2. Paul suffered from hallucinations.
3. Paul was victim of deception by others.
4. Paul told the truth; it happened.

Arrested by Jesus, Ph.3:12 [Jn.8:3]

Ph.1:17

A skeptic

- “Only the NT says these things occurred”
 - Wrong! Clement to Corinth, ch.47
 - Apostles ARE witnesses (Ac.26:16; 2 Pt.1:16).

Farrar (d. 1903)...

...it is impossible to exaggerate the importance of St. Paul's conversion as one of the evidences of Christianity. That he should have passed, by one flash of conviction, not only from darkness to light, but from one direction of life to the very opposite, is not only characteristic of the man, but evidential of the power and significance of Christianity.

Farrar (d. 1903)...

That the same man who, just before, was persecuting Christianity with the most violent hatred, should come all at once to believe in Him whose followers he had been seeking to destroy, and that in this faith he should become a “new creature” — what is this but a victory which Christianity owed to nothing but the spell of its own inherent power?

Farrar (d. 1903)...

Of all who have been converted to the faith of Christ, there is not one in whose case the Christian principle broke so immediately through everything opposed to it, and asserted so absolutely its triumphant superiority. Henceforth to Paul Christianity was summed up in the one word Christ.

Farrar (d. 1903)...

And to what does he testify respecting Jesus? To almost every single primarily important fact respecting His Incarnation, Life, Sufferings, Betrayal, Last Supper, Trial, Crucifixion, Resurrection, Ascension, and Heavenly Exaltation. We complain that nearly two thousand years have passed away, and that the brightness of historical events is apt to fade, and even their very outline to be obliterated, as they sink into the “dark backward and abysm of time.”

Farrar (d. 1903)...

Well, but are we more keen-sighted, more hostile, more eager to disprove the evidence, than the consummate legalist, the admired rabbi, the commissioner of the Sanhedrin, the leading intellect in the schools—learned as Hillel, patriotic as Judas of Gaulon, burning with zeal for the Law as intense as that of Shammai?

Farrar (d. 1903)...

He was not separated from the events, as we are, by centuries of time. He was not liable to be blinded, as we are, by the dazzling glamour of a victorious Christendom. He had mingled daily with men who had watched from Bethlehem to Golgotha the life of the Crucified—not only with His simple-hearted followers, but with His learned and powerful enemies. He had talked with the priests who had consigned Him to the cross; he had put to death the followers who had wept beside His tomb. He had to face the unutterable horror which, to any orthodox Jew, was involved in the thought of a Messiah who “had hung upon a tree.”

Farrar (d. 1903)...

He had heard again and again the proofs which satisfied an Annas and a Gamaliel that Jesus was a deceiver of the people. The events on which the Apostles relied, in proof of His divinity, had taken place in the full blaze of contemporary knowledge. He had not to deal with uncertainties of criticism or assaults on authenticity. He could question, not ancient documents, but living men; he could analyse, not fragmentary records, but existing evidence.

Farrar (d. 1903)...

He had thousands of means close at hand whereby to test the reality or unreality of the Resurrection in which, unto this time, he had so passionately and contemptuously disbelieved. In accepting this half-crushed and wholly execrated faith he had everything in the world to lose—he had nothing conceivable to gain; and yet, in spite of all—overwhelmed by a conviction which he felt to be irresistible—Saul, the Pharisee, became a witness of the Resurrection, a preacher of the Cross” – *Life and Work of St. Paul, Vol. 1, Frederic William Farrar, 114f.*

A.N.Sherwin-White

“For Acts the confirmation of historicity is overwhelming ... Any attempt to reject its basic historicity must now appear absurd” – Roman Society and Roman Law in the NT, 1963.