

Focus: True conversion is a *radical* experience of the work of God. The Lord pursues his enemies – not to destroy, but to save! He removes the curse, that he might bless.

Introduction: CS Lewis, “The hardness of God is kinder than the softness of men, and his compulsion is our liberation!” *Surprised by Joy*, p.229

I. The Charge – “Why are you persecuting me?”

A. Enemy of the people of God (Acts 8:1a; Acts 22:4)

B. Enemy of God! - Why are you persecuting **me!!** says Jesus.

- Zealous for God, but in ignorance – was opposing him. (Acts 5:39; 1 Timothy 1:13)

- **He had truly become an enemy of God (Rom.5:10)**

II. The Curse (Weight and reality of the Curse falls on Saul.)

A. The road to Damascus

- A voice speaks to him (22:9; 9:7)

- The Lord appeared to Saul in His resurrection Glory, ascended Glory. (26:16; 9:17; 1 Corinthians 15:8)

B. The Light Dawns (reveals what was hidden in darkness) - *I have been persecuting the Christ of God?*

C. The Darkness of Sin (7-9)

- Three days he experiences that darkness of the soul – in blindness!

- Curses for disobedience? Deut.28:28,29; Is.59:10

- **He will enter Damascus as a blind man!**

NOTE: The Lord calls whom he wills. He opens the eyes of whom he wills.

III. The Change – The *Enemy* is Conquered! Classic *Conversion!*

A. The Lord had prepared his heart. It is the humbling that must take place in the heart of any who would know God’s saving grace.

B. He sends Ananias

1. A faithful servant goes (13,14) What would your response be to that job?

2. A man – ready to receive

- 3 days to ponder the scriptures

- must interpret them in the light of the *risen Savior*.

C. Salvation Comes to the Lord's Enemy (17,18)

D. A "Classic Conversion"?

1. **Only in the sense of "start to finish it is the work of Christ to save him."**
2. Saul's conversion included:
 - Conviction of Sin!! Big Time
 - Looking to Jesus, the risen Lord, as the only hope of salvation
 - Believing in Him, and *on* him alone, for salvation
 - The "scales fell off" – physical representation of a spiritual
 - Receiving the Holy Spirit and the Sign of the Covenant (baptized!)
3. **Jesus Saves Sinners!!** God's enemy is taken as God's Servant – and Heir of Heaven!
4. He uses God's People in the process.

IV. The Call – A Chosen Instrument (15,16)

- A. The Apostle to the Gentiles - *Major step/piece in God's plan to reach to the ends of the earth.* (1 Timothy 1:12)
- B. He will suffer! If you seek and serve the Honor & Glory of Christ *You Will Suffer!* (Romans 8:18; 2 Corinthians 1:5; 1 Peter 4:13; Philippians 3:9)

V The Challenge – Zeal and Knowledge!

1. We must be brought to the end of ourselves
2. He must do it.
3. He does the choosing! "This man is my chosen instrument" (John 15:16; John 6:44; Ephesians 1:3-7)
4. His plans are always best, right & Good!
5. Grant us knowledge of the Savior – and Zeal for His Kingdom.

Closing: Jesus is clearly *The Hound of Heaven* - Francis Thompson