

Read Through the Bible

Week 26: June 28th - July 4th

Readings: Job 6 – 25; Acts 7:44 – 10:48

Reflections and Questions by Jerry Emery

ACTS 8

With Stephen's death, a reign of terror began for the Christians in Jerusalem. Because of the heavy persecution, they moved into Judea and Samaria. Jesus had instructed his followers to begin their witness in Jerusalem and then move out to Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth. Who do we find to be the most zealous persecutor of all? Saul of Tarsus.

Saul was probably in his early thirties at this time. He was regarded by the rabbis' as one of the most promising young man in Judaism.. He was a man on the move. He saw the growth of the Christian Faith as a threat to his own. He had authorization from the High Priest to destroy the Christian Faith. His trip to Damascus changed his life. He became a new creature in Christ. Why God would choose Saul to be the one to take the gospel to the ends of the earth? Who would you chose to do the job? A man who acted strongly on his convictions? God took Saul and his zeal and his strong convictions and turned him into Paul, who still had zeal and strong convictions, but now for the cause of Christ.

From the story of Paul's conversion, I take hope for those friends and family who seem the least likely to convert and become followers of Christ. God can do the impossible.

The Lord had big plans for Paul (Acts 9 15-16). "He is a chosen vessel of mine to my name before Gentiles, kings and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for my namesake."

When a person is truly converted, certain things happen that show that true conversion has taken place. This was true of Saul of Tarsus.

Here is a list compiled by Francis W. Dixon

1. He met the Lord and heard his voice. He received a divine revelation, and only that convinced him and made him a humble inquirer and devoted follower.
2. He was filled with longing to obey the Lord and to do his will (Acts 9:6)
3. He began to pray (9:11)
4. He was baptized. (9:18)
5. He united in fellowship with God's people (9:19)
6. He began to testify powerfully (9:20)
7. He grew in grace. (9:22)

Does your life fit this list?