

THINGS A BLIND MAN SAW

Acts 9:1-9

I. INTRODUCTION: I

1. **2** Do you remember the account of the man called “Saul of Tarsus”?
 - A. We first meet Saul in Acts 7 when Stephen was stoned: **Acts 7:58**: “...the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul.”
 - B. Sadly, Saul took pleasure in the death of righteous Stephen; he “was in hearty agreement” (8:1, NAS).
 - C. Saul continues his persecution of the church: **Acts 8:3**: “As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.”
2. Saul became the primary focus of Luke’s historical narrative as Acts 9 opens: “Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest 2 and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.”
3. As we proceed through Acts 9 we find Saul on the road to Damascus to fulfill the evil commission he received from the high priest.
 - A. Suddenly Saul was blinded by a light from heaven and heard the Lord say to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” (Acts 9:4)
 - B. Saul gets the message and replies, “Lord, what do You want me to do?” (Acts 9:6)
 - C. The Lord’s reply, “Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.” (Acts 9:6)
 - D. But as Saul arises to go into Damascus, he is blinded and has to be led by the hand (Acts 9:7-8).
 - E. Luke further informs us when Saul went into the city “...he was three days without sight” (Acts 9:9).
4. **3** Saul was without sight for three days, but he still “saw” some very important things.

II. DISCUSSION:

1. **4** It Didn’t Matter What He Thought:
 - A. Saul said, “I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth” (Acts 26:9).
 - B. This is where Saul went astray.
 - (1) **Isa. 55:8**: “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.”
 - (2) Jeremiah exclaimed, “O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jeremiah 10:23).
 - (3) Wise Solomon stated, “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Proverbs 14:12).
 - C. We must learn, as Saul learned, that it really doesn’t matter what we think or what seems right to us, but what God thinks and says! (recall Naaman? **2 Kgs. 5:11**: “Behold, I thought...”)
 - D. Have you learned that lesson? Have I?
2. **5** The Need for the Right Source of Authority:
 - A. Saul, where’s your authority for shutting up Christians in prison? “...having received authority from the chief priests” (Acts 26:10).
 - B. There are only two sources of authority in religion: “from heaven, or of men” (Matthew 21:25).
 - (1) Christ has all authority in heaven and earth (Matt. 28:18).

(2) He is “the head over all things to the church” (Eph. 1:22).

(3) All is to be done in His name or by His authority (Col. 3:17).

C. When it comes to what you do religiously, “By what authority doest thou these things, and who gave thee this authority?” (Matthew 21:23; 7:21-23)

(1) Basing our religion on the precepts of men, makes our religion vain! **Matt 15:9:** “And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”

(2) We live in the so-called postmodernism era where every man is allowed to define “his” own truth, but Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” (Jn. 14:6)

3. **6** Conscience Is Not a Safe Guide:

A. “Let your conscience be your guide.” Be careful!

B. “Saul, when you punished the saints in every synagogue, compelled them to blaspheme and persecuted them even unto strange cities, did your conscience bother you?” “No!” “...I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day” (Acts 23:1).

C. In religion too many just want to let their conscience be their guide: “If it feels good, do it.”

(1) Conscience is the inner sense of right/wrong in one’s conduct based upon what he’s been taught.

(2) But, if we’ve been taught wrong, then we can engage in wrong and feel right about it.

(3) Therefore, our conscience is only a safe guide when it has been taught right! e.g., Hitler

(4) So first and foremost, even before conscience: **Rom. 4:3:** “What saith the scripture?”; 1 Pet. 4:11

4. **7** He Had to Change Religions:

A. I’m convinced this is the hardest thing for human beings to do!

B. Saul said, “...according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee” (Acts 26:5).

C. Saul (who also is called Paul) wrote the Galatians, “For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews’ religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: And profited in the Jews’ religion above many my equals in mine own nation...” (Gal. 1:13-14). Paul was a real “mover and shaker”; a “leading light”; a “golden boy”; a “rising star.”

D. But, Saul changed from being a Jew to being a Christian.

(1) Have you thought about the possibility of needing to change religions?

(2) Contrary to popular thought, one religion is not as good as another.

E. A lot of folks struggle with this today.

(1) Like Saul, it may be that you’ve belonged to a certain religion “all your life.”

(2) Like Saul, you may have a long family history in your religion (**Matt. 10:37:** “He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.”).

(3) Saul “saw” that he needed to change religions, and he did that in a very short period of time (honestly mistaken: either cease to be mistaken, or cease to be honest).

(4) He “saw” the value! **Phil. 3:5-7** Do you see the value?

5. **8** Traditions of Men Lead to Religious Error:

- A. Saul was no “lightweight”: *“...I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.”* (Gal. 1:14).
- B. Many blindly follow what is handed down from generation to generation (e.g., RCC; denominational creeds, catechisms, etc.).
- C. Respect for preceding generations is good to a point, but if we follow human traditions, the Lord told the scribes and Pharisees that they *“made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition”* and *“in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men”* (Matt. 15:3-9).
- D. It doesn’t matter how trustworthy we might think a man is; how noble, how reliable, etc.
 - (1) To trust in men will ultimately lead to failure! Jer. 10:23; **Psa. 118:8**: *“It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.”*
 - (2) Put every man’s teaching to the test! Acts 17:11 (discuss how I study)

6. **9** He Was Not Saved By Prayer:

- A. A lot of folks today are being told that to be saved they must pray “The Sinner’s Prayer.”
 - (1) I’ve run across that tract several times in public places.
 - (2) But, I’ve never run across it in the Bible!
- B. If there is ever a “Sinner’s Prayer” in the Bible it’s the prayer Saul prayed in: **Acts 9:11**: *“So the Lord said to him, ‘Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying.’”* Saul was not saved by that prayer!
- C. If saved by prayer, Saul would have been saved before he was even told what he must do to be saved, and who can believe that? **Acts 22:12-16**
- D. It is so sad that so many have not seen what Saul “saw” in regards to salvation! Mk. 16:16; Gal. 3:27

7. **10** Salvation Is an Individual Affair:

- A. When Saul lay trembling and astonished on that Damascus road, he didn’t say, “Lord, what wilt thou have the chief priests to do?” or “Lord, what wilt thou have my father do?”
- B. He said, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” *“And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do”* (Acts 9:6).
- C. We must help and encourage one another (e.g., **Gal. 6:1-2**: *“Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. 2 Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”*; **Heb. 10:24-25**: *“And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”*).
- D. It doesn’t matter how faithful (or unfaithful) our parents, spouse, or home congregation might be!
- E. In the final analysis our salvation depends only upon ourselves (**Phil. 2:12**: *“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”*).

8. **I I** What One Must Do to Have His Sins Washed Away:

- A. In the city Saul was told by Ananias: “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16).
- B. Baptism stands squarely between a person and his sins being washed away.
- C. This is why one should want to be baptized—to have his sins washed away!
- D. This is so easy to understand, but the majority of “Christendom” totally misses this vital point: Mk. 16:16; **1 Pet. 3:21**: “The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”; **Col. 2:12**: “buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.”).

9. **I 2** The Chief of Sinners Can Be Saved:

- A. Some may think they’ve been so bad and sinful they could not possibly ever be saved.
- B. Paul was indeed a “bad” person:
Acts 8:1: “And Saul was there, giving approval to his death.” (NIV)
Acts 8:3: “As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison.”
1 Tim. 1:13: “I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor.” (NAS)
- C. But, Paul declared:
1 Tim. 1:15-16a: “This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. 16 However, for this reason I obtained mercy...”
- D. The gospel is for all, and has the power to effect the same kind of change in hearts and lives today as we observe in Saul of Tarsus in the first century:
Rom. 1:16-17: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith.’”
1 Jn. 2:1-2: “My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. 2 And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.”
Jn. 3:16: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”
Rev. 22:17: “And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come.’ And let him that heareth say, ‘Come.’ And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”).

III. CONCLUSION: I 3

- 1. Saul “saw” much while he was blind.
- 2. We are not blind, but can we see the truth?
2 Cor. 6:2: “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”

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