

The New Testament Church
The Purpose of Pentecost #3 – The Conversion of Saul – Acts 9:1-31
Pastor Paul Jehle – June 11, 2023

I The Feast of Passover and Pentecost

- A. The Feast of Passover – Exodus 12 - Born again – new life in Christ – sovereign regeneration
 - 1. It marks the “first day of the new year” – father selects a lamb, family bonds with it 4 days
 - 2. Evidence of the Passover and Exodus of Israelites by a Pillar of Fire / landbridge through sea
- B. Pentecost (Ex. 17-20; Lev. 23:15-21; Num. 28:26-31; Dt. 16:9-12) and Passover directly linked
 - 1. Pentecost means “50th” – Moses gets Law at 50th day (two tables of the Law)
 - a. Led by cloud, emphasizing a baptism in water (conversion) and the Spirit (holiness)
 - b. Led by fire, cleansing and judgment (all sacrifices by fire) on mountain and in the Spirit
 - c. Receive Word, the Law (two loaves of bread) and writing law in hearts! (responsibility)
 - 2. Pentecost is a *covenant of change* – to become more like Him – from glory to glory!
 - a. Israel was to be a kingdom of priests (vertical) and a holy nation (horizontal)
 - b. The Church is to be a bride (vertical - beatitudes) and a city (horizontal – salt and light)
 - 3. Acts 2 Pentecost fulfills both the symbols and purpose of the Old Testament Pentecost
 - a. A rushing wind came into the room – the glory of God brought excited reverence
 - b. Tongues of fire sat on each individual – the cleansing would come within by tongues
 - c. They spoke the Word of God in the languages of the people – the *mission* had begun!

II The Conversion of Saul – Acts 9:1-31

- A. Roman culture was had degenerated to the lowest among known civilized nations at the time
 - 1. Lifespan was only 20, little knowledge of medicine, healing, and no hope after death
 - 2. Inequality of women, girls, and slaves were 40% of the population
 - 3. Racism was normal, and the Jews were only 7% of the population of Rome at the time
- B. Saul, a radical Jew (Galatians 1:11-18) – became the primary Apostle to the Gentiles
 - 1. Saul encounters Christ on the road to Damascus – voice of God, fire of light, humble obedience
 - 2. He is blinded and must be led into Damascus, neither eating or drinking for three days
 - 3. Ananias is sent to Saul being convinced by God he was actually converted, to heal his blindness and be baptized in the Holy Spirit (presumably with speaking in tongues)
 - 4. He was immediately water baptized as a confirmation of his conversion
 - 5. He spent several days with the disciples at Damascus, then to Arabia for three years both being in seclusion with God and then presenting Christ in the synagogues at Damascus...
 - 6. After “many days” – the Jews plotted to kill Saul (Hebrew name), Paul (Greek), but he found out and was let down through the wall in a basket...
 - 7. Finally, he was accepted in Jerusalem by the apostles and relative peace (for years) occurred
- C. Paul becomes the “most significant Christian convert in all of history.” (Bart Erhart)
 - 1. Paul was the catalyst to fulfill Christ’s commission in Matthew 28 and Acts 1
 - 2. His three missionary trips totaled more than 10,000 miles
 - 3. Started at least 13 churches – millions of converts
 - 4. Wrote 13 of the 27 books of the New Testament
 - 5. Martyred in 64 AD(CE) by Nero at 58 years of age?
 - 6. By 400 AD a legacy of over 30 million believers
- D. Lessons learned from Saul/Paul:
 - 1. God orchestrates and calls individuals that demonstrate His power and wisdom; *we are to be sensitive to the Spirit and obey His will*
 - 2. We ought to continue to pray for those who are enemies of Christ and His liberty today – *we may see some dramatic testimonies of conversion!*
 - 3. The most powerful weapon against darkness is the conversion of a heart by the grace of God!