

A Light From Heaven

Acts 9:3 “And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:”

Acts chapter nine records the most important conversion in almost two thousand years! Here the Lord made a selection contrary to man’s ways. The Lord selected his worst enemy to be his champion of Grace.

No other conversion in scripture is referred to more, the major part of three chapters. Paul’s salvation forms the main subject of two of Paul’s five recorded discourses.

1 Corinthians 15:8 “And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.” The term “born out of due time” is *ektroma* in the Greek. It is only found here and means, born out of due time. In other words Paul is testifying that his salvation experience was like an abortion, or an untimely birth.

Not only was the time out of kilter but the place was also estranged. He was on his way to Jerusalem, on the road to Damascus of Lebanon, some 60-70 miles north of Jerusalem. He was far from the historical place of worship and the temple.

This 1 Corinthians 15:8 passage instructs us as to two unusual facts. Number one as to his birth and number two as to its timing. His birth was the first of a new order. 1 Timothy 1:15+16 “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.”

His birth was to be used as a pattern for the Lord in saving all those who would come after him in salvation in this new dispensation.

Acts 9:3 says that a light from Heaven shined round about him. Sometimes spotlights are used to uncover or discover certain areas. This heavenly spotlight is articulated in the Greek. Paul was called not from an earthly program, but from “the” Heavens! His name was the first recorded far above all else in that heavenly elect company. This is the first time the light from Heaven has incased a human salvation in the dispensation of Grace. I wonder who will be the last.

Not only was there a light from heaven, but there was a voice also. The precious voice of the second person of the trinity and godhead, Christ Jesus. It must have been really

something to hear and see at the same time from heaven itself. “Those that were with him stood speechless.” Paul’s reaction was that he fell to the earth, trembling and astonished according to verses 4 and 5 of Acts 9. Later in the last account of Paul’s testimony in Acts 26:1-19 [in verse 14] we learn that the Lord spoke in the Hebrew tongue. This is remarkable. The common language of the day was Greek, yet when the Lord speaks to Saul it is in Hebrew. In salvation it is the Lord who pursues us. He visits our life and communicates to us as no man can convey.

When reading all three accounts of Paul’s salvation, it seems as though there is a different account of what the others heard as to the voice in the Authorized Version. But clearly they heard the voice as a sound, which they could not understand. Each time someone initially becomes a believer, the salvation transformation is unique. The others couldn’t hear because they were non-elect! Only the elect are able to hear and understand when the Lord speaks. When goats hear the words of God it is a mere sound that does not translate into understanding and leaves them confused.