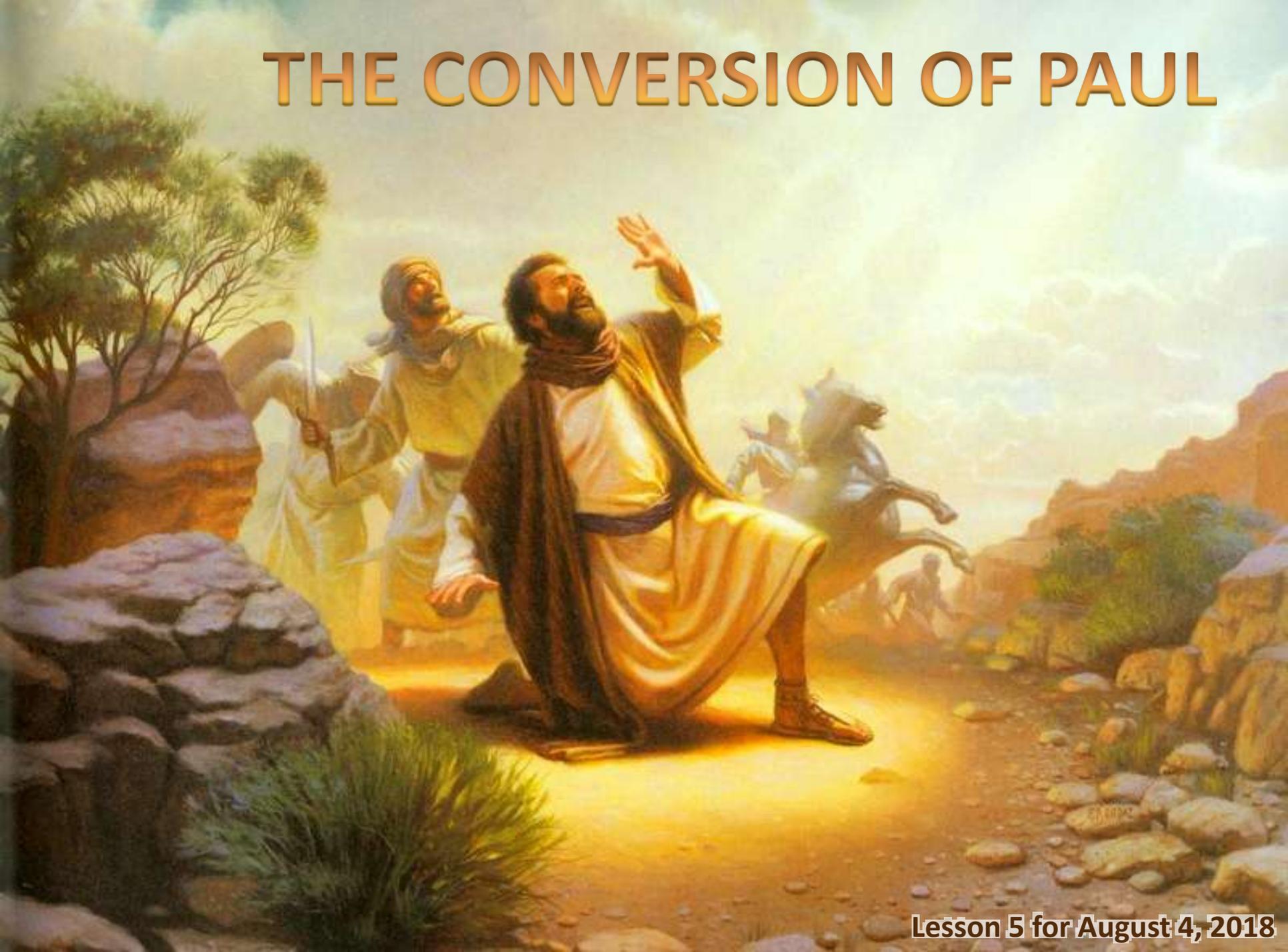
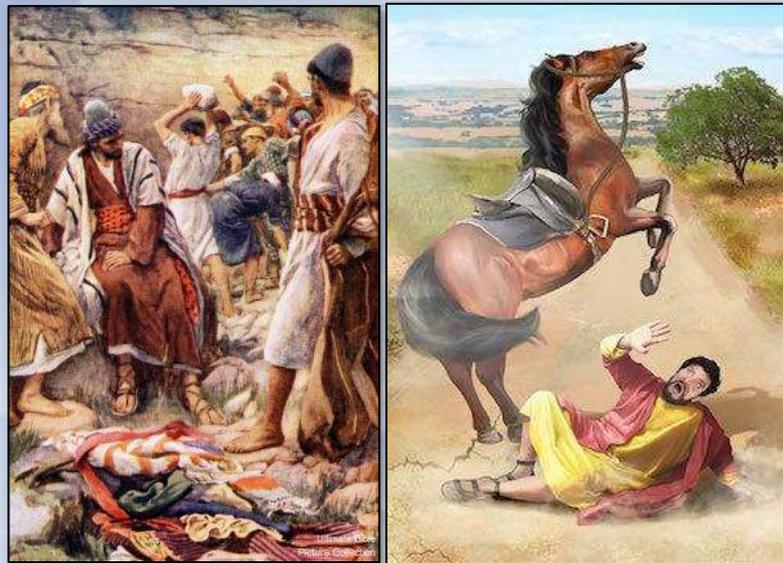
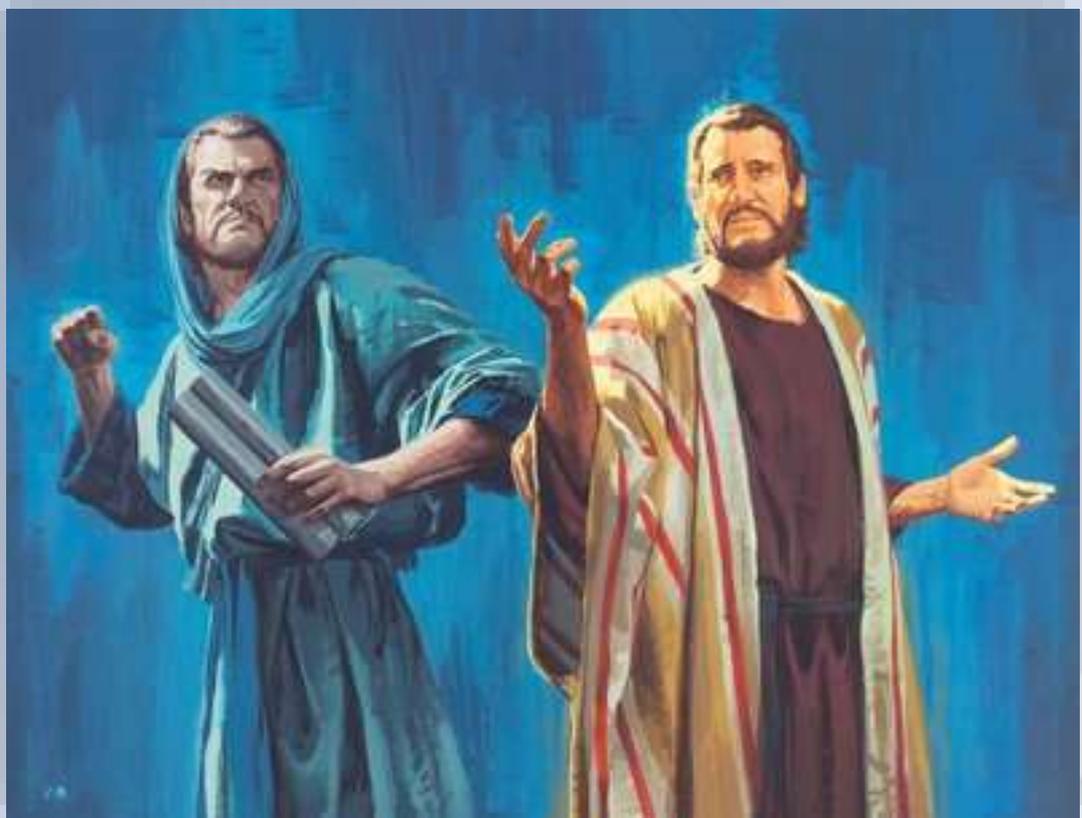


THE CONVERSION OF PAUL



After the stoning of Stephen, the Sanhedrin allowed Saul of Tarsus (Paul) to persecute the followers of Jesus of Nazareth. Saul became the “apostle” of the Sanhedrin to destroy the sect called “the Way.” But Jesus intervened to put him under His command. He had a place for Paul in His ranks as an apostle to the Gentiles.



- Apostle of the Sanhedrin.**
 - ◎ **Persecuting the Church. Acts 9:1-2**
 - ◎ **Kicking against the goads. Acts 9:3-9**
- Apostle of Jesus.**
 - ◎ **Paul’s conversion. Acts 9:10-18**
 - ◎ **Paul in Damascus. Acts 9:19-25**
 - ◎ **Paul in Jerusalem. Acts 9:26-31**

PERSECUTING THE CHURCH



"Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest 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." (Acts 9:1-2)

Saul explained that he sincerely believed his duty was to severely persecute those believing in Jesus Christ (Acts 26:9-11)

A person who died hanging on a tree was cursed by God, so he couldn't accept that the Messiah died this way (Deuteronomy 21:22-23)

The Sanhedrin gave him authority, so he became their *shalia*, an official messenger. The Greek word for *shalia* is *apóstolos* (i.e. apostle). Saul was the apostle of the Sanhedrin.

He travelled north for 135 miles to Damascus. He intended to arrest the believers of "the Way" and then bring them to Jerusalem to be judged for heresy.





KICKING AGAINST THE GOADS

“And he said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ Then the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’” (Acts 9:5)

Everyone travelling with Saul saw the light and fell to the ground, but only him became blind. Only Saul understood what the voice said because this was a vision prepared for him.

Saul was persecuting the Church, but Jesus considered Saul was persecuting Him. “He who touches you touches the apple of His eye.” (Zechariah 2:8)

An ox goad is a long stick with a sharp iron end. Farmers used it to spur or guide livestock. Kicking it only caused harm.

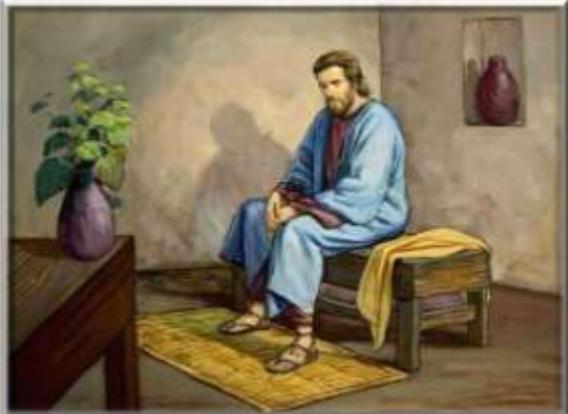
Saul was kicking the “goad” of his conscience, because he doubted that Jesus was the true Messiah. When he saw the face of the resurrected Jesus, his reasons fell apart.

PAUL'S CONVERSION

"Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized." (Acts 9:18)



Paul was willing to follow Jesus and asked Him, "what do You want me to do?" Then, he became blind for three days. Paul renounced his position as an apostle of the Sanhedrin and became an apostle of Jesus.



He had to meet the Church and become part of it. Then he could work together with the Church.



Ananias was called for that purpose. He had reasonable doubts, but he finally met Paul. He restored his sight and confirmed his divine calling. Ananias encouraged Paul to be baptized and become part the Church.

PAUL IN DAMASCUS

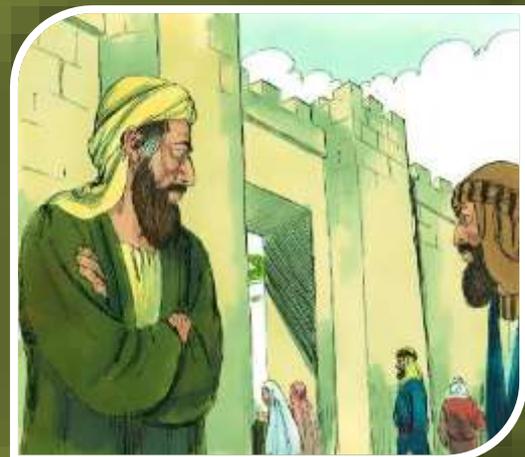
“Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God. [...] Now after many days were past, the Jews plotted to kill him.” (Acts 9:20, 23)



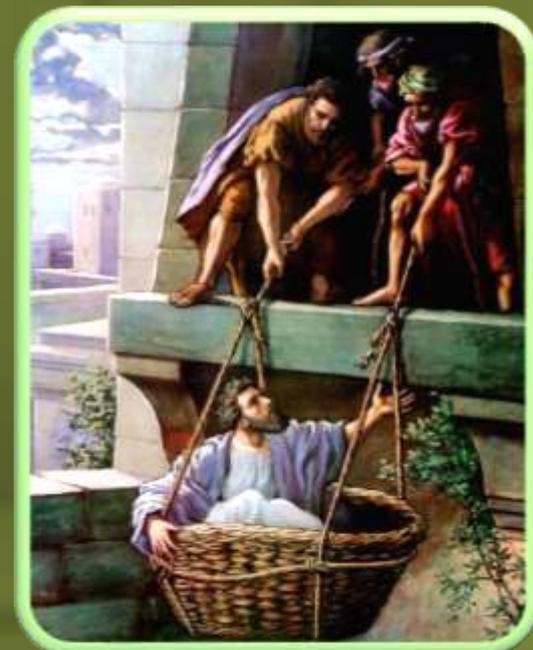
The same man who came to arrest the followers of the “false messiah” was defending them in the synagogues. He was also proving with the scriptures that Jesus was the true Messiah.



The Jews got alarmed and sought support from the civil authority to arrest Paul (2 Corinthians 11:32-33)



The believers helped Paul and let him down through the wall in a large basket. This incident didn't discourage the new apostle, because he was already warned that he would suffer for his Teacher (Acts 9:16)



PAUL IN JERUSALEM

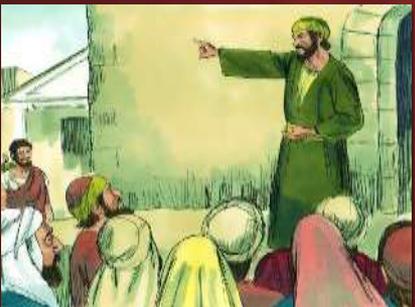
“When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple.” (Acts 9:26 NIV)

The church in Jerusalem didn't believe the conversion of the cruel persecutor was real, although Paul had been converted three years before.

God used Barnabas to break that prejudice.

Paul continued the work of Stephen in Jerusalem; the same work he had interrupted before. His preaching was as rejected as Stephen's. The life of Paul was in danger.

A vision was sent to move him to leave Jerusalem (Acts 22:17-21). He was helped to escape again by his brothers.



The books of Acts and Galatians tell Paul's itinerary from his conversion to his first missionary trip.



Saul's conversion
in Damascus
(Acts 9:1-18)

Preaching in
Damascus
(Acts 9:19-22)

Back to Damascus
and escaping down
the city wall
(Acts 9:23-25)

Staying in
Arabia
(Galatians 1:17)

Visiting Jerusalem
after three years
from his conversion
(Galatians 1:18)

Preaching in the
regions of Syria
and Cilicia
(Galatians 1:21)

He is sent as a
missionary along
with Barnabas
(Acts 13:1-3)

Barnabas brings
Paul to Antioch
(Acts 11:25-26)

“Always the Lord gives the human agent his work. Here is the divine and the human cooperation. There is the man working in obedience to divine light given. If Saul had said, Lord, I am not at all inclined to follow Your specified directions to work out my own salvation, then should the Lord have let ten times the light shine upon Saul, it would have been useless.

It is man’s work to cooperate with the divine. And it is the very hardest, sternest conflict which comes with the purpose and hour of great resolve and decision of the human to incline the will and way to God’s will and God’s way, relying upon the gracious influences which accompanied him all his life long. [...] Follow and obey the leadings of the Holy Spirit.”

E.G.W. (Mind, Character, and Personality, vol. 2, cp. 84, p. 757)