



I. Why is Saul's conversion told THREE TIMES in Acts?

a. Theological emphasis:

- i. *The Fact of Resurrection*: Saul's radical about-face is inexplicable apart from a genuine encounter with the risen Christ. This supports Luke's broader aim in Acts: to demonstrate that the resurrection is not myth, but fact.
 1. *"And falling to the ground he heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?'"* (Acts 9:4).
 2. *"Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me"* (1 Cor. 15:8).
- ii. *The Extravagance of Grace*: If Saul can be saved, anyone can.
 1. *"And all who heard him were amazed and said, 'Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem of those who called upon this name?'"* (Acts 9:21).
 2. *"But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life"* (1 Tim. 1:16).
- iii. *The Gentile Mission*: The risen Jesus commissions Paul to reach Gentiles.
 1. *"But the Lord said to him, 'Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel'"* (Acts 9:15).
 2. *"And he said to me, 'Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles'"* (Acts 22:21).
 3. *"But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you, delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me"* (Acts 26:16–18).

b. Model for witnessing:

- i. To "witness" is to tell your story—what you've seen and heard.
 1. *"For we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard"* (Acts 4:20).
 2. Though the apostles witnessed the risen Christ with their physical eyes and ears, we too have encountered Him—through the Spirit, the Word, and His work in our lives. Our witness may not be based on visible appearances, but it is still rooted in real experience: what you've experienced of the risen Christ (John 14:21; 1 Pet. 1:8).
- ii. Just as courtroom witnesses share about how their experience intersects with "what happened," our testimony likewise bears witness to what happened to Jesus—His life, death, and resurrection.
- iii. In other words, to "witness" is to tell BOTH your story AND Christ's.
- iv. Each testimony follows a pattern:
 1. Before Christ
 - a. *"I persecuted this Way to the death..."* (Acts 22:4).
 - b. *"I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things in opposing the name of Jesus of Nazareth"* (Acts 26:9).
 2. Encounter with Christ
 - a. *"As I was on my way and drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone around me"* (Acts 22:6).
 - b. *"I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?'"* (Acts 26:14).

3. After Christ
 - a. *"And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized"* (Acts 9:18).
 - b. *"Therefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision"* (Acts 26:19).
- v. Not every testimony is outwardly dramatic—but all are inwardly miraculous.
 1. *"For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts..."* (2 Cor. 4:6)
 2. *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation."* (2 Cor. 5:17)
 3. *"But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved"* (Eph. 2:4-5).
 4. *"But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior"* (Titus 3:4-6).
- vi. If your testimony is less outwardly dramatic, focus on:
 1. Key moments of encounter with Christ (Scripture, prayer, conviction)
 2. Ongoing transformation
 3. Healing, freedom, calling (Paul mentions healing from blindness and calling to Gentiles—Acts 9:15-18; 22:21; 22:16-18).
- c. Sum: Being a witness isn't just telling your story. It's telling your story about Jesus—what you've seen, heard, and experienced of Him—as a testimony of His resurrection, His grace, and His heart for the lost.

II. Why is Saul's story told DIFFERENTLY on each of the three occasions?

- a. Details only in Acts 9 (Narrator's version):
 - i. **Ananias's vision and fear:** *"Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem..."* (Acts 9:13).
 - ii. **Healing through Ananias:** *"Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus... has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit"* (Acts 9:17).
 - iii. **Saul's immediate preaching:** *"And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, 'He is the Son of God'"* (Acts 9:20).
 - iv. **Purpose:** To establish Paul's acceptance among the Jewish community.
- b. Details only in Acts 22:
 - i. **Jewish credentials emphasized:** *"I am a Jew, born in Tarsus... educated at the feet of Gamaliel... being zealous for God..."* (Acts 22:3).
 - ii. **Ananias described as a devout Jew:** *"Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there..."* (Acts 22:12).
 - iii. **Vision about Jewish rejection and Gentile calling:** *"When I had returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance and saw him saying to me, 'Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me.' And I said, 'Lord, they themselves know that in one synagogue after another I imprisoned and beat those who believed in you. And when the blood of Stephen your witness was being shed, I myself was standing by and approving and watching over the garments of those who killed him.' And he said to me, 'Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles'"* (Acts 22:17-21).
 - iv. **Purpose:** To relate to his Jewish audience while also clarifying that the controversial calling to Gentiles was not his idea; it came straight from the mouth of the risen Lord.
- c. Details only in Acts 26:

- i. **More Vivid Description of Persecution:** *"In raging fury against them I persecuted them even to foreign cities"* (Acts 26:11).
 - ii. **Expanded Commission of Jesus:** *"But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you, delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me"* (Acts 26:16–18).
 - iii. **Paul's Obedience and Fulfillment of Prophecy:** *"Therefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout all the region of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance. For this reason the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me. To this day I have had the help that comes from God, and so I stand here testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass: that the Christ must suffer and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles."* (Acts 26:19–23).
 - iv. **Purpose:** To appeal to a Gentile audience with themes of spiritual liberation, obedience, and prophetic fulfillment.
- d. When sharing your story, contextualize it for your audience and setting—but without compromising truthfulness.
 - i. **Know Your Audience:** Ask, *"What parts my story will resonate most?"*
 - 1. *To the religious:* Emphasize your sincere efforts before Christ and how He fulfilled what you were missing (like Paul in Acts 22).
 - 2. *To the skeptic or secular friend:* Focus on internal transformation—peace, freedom, hope—that your encounter with Jesus brought.
 - 3. *To the wounded or weary:* Highlight how Christ met you in suffering, shame, or sin with undeserved grace.
 - 4. *To the hostile or defensive:* Be gentle, honest, and disarming. Paul was respectful even under pressure (Acts 26:2–3).
 - 5. *To a Christian audience:* Include your calling, growth, and obedience—aspects of how God continues shaping you (Acts 26:19–23).
 - ii. **Adapt to the Setting:** Ask, *"How much time do I have, and what kind of tone fits the moment?"*
 - 1. *Over coffee or dinner:* Take your time, invite questions, and show vulnerability.
 - 2. *In a short window* (e.g., elevator, Uber, casual encounter): Share one powerful sentence or story: "I used to be ____, but Jesus ____."
 - 3. *In a formal talk or sermon:* Structure your story to model gospel transformation—Before Christ → Encounter with Christ → Life After Christ.
 - 4. *In a crisis or counseling moment:* Center on the comfort, healing, or presence of Christ in your own dark valleys.
 - 5. *On social media:* Choose clarity over completeness. Highlight one facet of your story with boldness and grace.
- e. Other helpful tips:
 - i. **Practice telling your story.** Paul shared his story often (e.g., Acts 22, Acts 26, Galatians 1, Philippians 3, and 1 Timothy 1).
 - ii. **Ask people to tell their story.**
 - 1. *Examples:* "Tell me about yourself"; "Have you ever had a spiritual experience?"; "Do you have any religious background?"

2. Be sure to listen. This helps you contextualize your story.
3. People often respond with curiosity: "What about you?" That's your invitation to witness.
- iii. **Keep Christ at the Center.** Your story is not a memoir; it is a testimony. The hero is Jesus, not you. Your life is the backdrop: Jesus is the main character.
 1. Don't just tell how you changed—tell who changed you.
 2. Don't just talk about sin or struggle—show how Jesus met you in it.
 3. Don't just talk about blessing—show how Jesus is the greatest gift.
 4. As Paul put it, "We proclaim Christ in you... the hope of glory" (Col. 1:28).

III. **Summary: The Power of Telling Your Story**

- a. Paul's story is told three times in Acts not for repetition, but for impact.
- b. His life is a model of gospel witness—contextualized for each audience and setting, yet always centered on Christ.
- c. Your story matters too—not because it's dramatic, but because it's true, and because Jesus is in it.
- d. *"Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he has redeemed from trouble"* (Ps. 107:2).