

LESSON 25

The Conversion of Paul

- Objective** : God's power is sufficient to turn the enemy into friend.
- Bible Portion** : Acts 9:1-18,22:1-21, 26: 1-23
- Memory Verse** : 1Tim 1:13-16

Even though I was once a blasphemer a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. The grace of our lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Here is a trust worthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as a, example for those who would believe on him and receive and eternal life.

Introduction

We have already learnt in the previous lesson about the family birth and education of Paul. The life and witness of Saint Stephen helped Paul's life to be chosen according to the will of god. Let us learn in detail the conservation of young Paul.

The most wonderful event in the history of the early church is the conversion of Paul. The history of Paul's conservation discussed in the 9th chapter of Acts by Luke, by Paul himself to the Jews in Jerusalem and thirdly at the royal chamber of Agrippa at Caeseria.

After education in Jerusalem, Saul went to Tarsus, his native place. He was not present in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus public ministry and the foundation of the church. If Cleary indicates that Paul did not meet Jesus in person. He visited Jerusalem to have debate with Stephen who was a living warrior of the gospel of Jesus Christ. He could not stand

before Stephen. His scholarship turned to futile. the message of the preaching of Stephen in 7th chapter of Acts made Paul thoughtful. Before Sanhedrin, he saw Stephen's face as angel of god (Acts 6:15). Jews were famous and gnashed their teeth at him. They dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Saul felt discomfort at seeing Stephen spirit filled and tabled about the vision of heaven and his prayer of forgiveness, Saul was staying there permitting the Jews to kill stephen and he had kept his clothes (Acts- 7:58,22:20). All the events made Saul thoughtful. Instead of submitting himself to the great truth of gospel, he worked against it. He was bold to kill christians and destroy Christians than anyone of his age mates. After the death of stephen, a great persecution arose against the church. saul was the leader of the persecutors. He behaved as a mad to destroy the church. He dragged off man and women from house to house and put them in prison. He killed many (Acts 8:3, 9:1, 2:22, 4:26,9:11, 22:19, 20, Gal:11:13-14).Through these version one get the comman nature of Paul'a persecution. He saws against the christians witnessing Jesus as Messiah. It was because of his blind attitude towards the jewish customs. But after recieving Jesus, he came to accept the fact that he had behaved ignorant and folly, and those behaviours were punishable and shameful in the presence of God (1Tim 1:13-16)

The church was scatted out Palastine at the time of persecution in the time of Stephen. But the churches were raised wherever they went (Act 8:1-4,11:19-20). Christians were emerged in Damascus, a leading city of Syria. Saul was so angry at this. So he planned to spread persecution out of palastine.Sanhedrin and chief priest had authority over jews living anywhere. So Saul planned to execute the belivers by getting letter of authority from chief priest. He aws ready for an adventure with a group of men. But he was caught by the divine light of Jesus Christ. Whom he had been persecuting for some years. the disciples at Damascus was eagerly praying to God for mercy at hearing Saul's arrival.

It took a week from Jerusalem to Damascus. The journey was through wilderness on horses or donkeys. Thus they reached near the gate of Damascus. Saul wished that his planning came to sucess. What happened then?

We got a complete form of events when we study the three descriptions clearly. It was noon a light from heaven flashed around them. It was brighter than the sun. It was concentrated on Paul. The men travelling with Paul stood speechless. They heard the sound. But the words were clear only to Saul. He heard in Hebrew language "Why do you persecute me? Saul asked, "Who are you ? , Lord?". Saul was surprised at the answer that he persecuted Jesus and his people. The answer from the lord was very clear.

1. Jesus is the Lord

2. Persecuting the people of god is like persecuting the lord.

3. Listen to the second question from Saul, "What shall I do Lord?" "Once he misunderstood the original Messiah as a fake one. Now he leaves his worldly thoughts and accepts the lordship of Jesus. Paul repentance was due to the work of holy spirit (Rom.10:9, 1 Cori 12:3, Mtt. 16:16-17). He made an end to all his own activities . He wants to go according to the will of his companions. What shall I do Lord? The lord asked him to go to Damascus, he entered into Damascus with the help of his companions. The works of the Lord was wonderful. Saul was blind for three days and did not taste any food.

Thus Ananias got the vision from the Lord about the events. He was led to Saul. As he prayed for Saul, some thing like scale fell from saul's eyes. Then he was baptised and filled with the holy spirit. He stayed with the disciples for a while.

Questions

1. How the life and witness of Stephen led to the conversation of Paul?
2. Why Saul persecuted the christians?
3. How he persecuted the christians?
4. Describe the events in Damascus systemically?
5. When Saul accept the Lord?
6. How did he obey the truth he believed?