



ACTS:
A HISTORY BOOK
Living **IN YOU**

Part 13

The Conversion of Saul

Acts 9:1 – 19



★ Damascus
★ Jerusalem



Without question, the story of Saul's "conversion" is one of the most important events, if not the most important event, that Luke records in Acts.



Tarsus

Damascus

Jerusalem



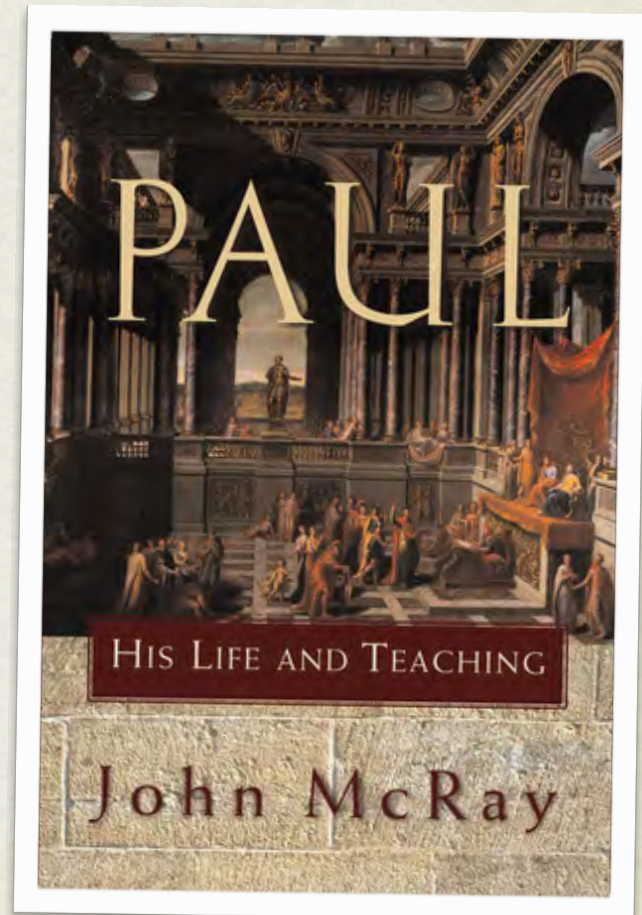


Bible History Online

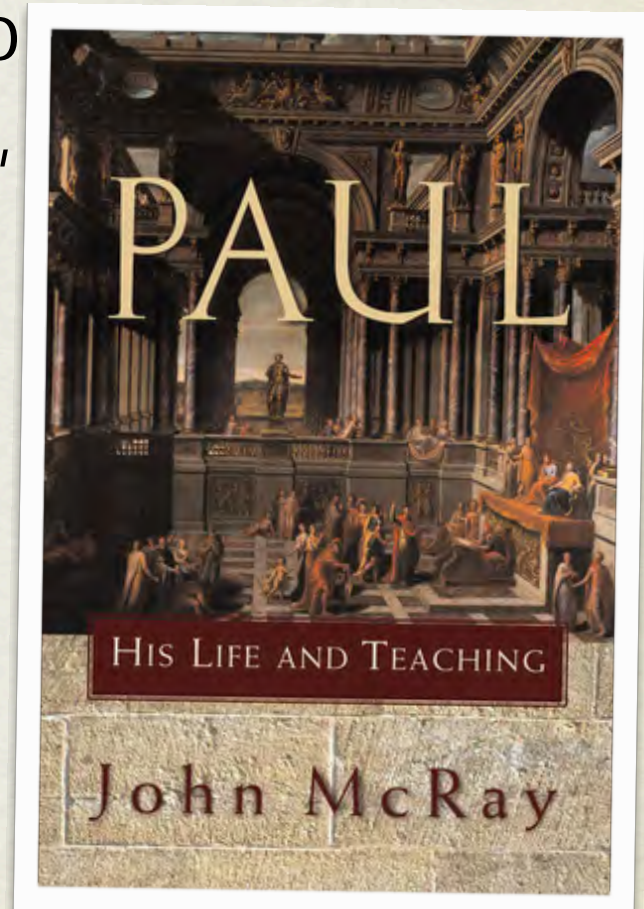


Hillel did not repeal Torah or nullify it; he simply set it aside by interpretation.

After all, life took precedence over the letter of the law, he reasoned, for the Torah was a "law of life."

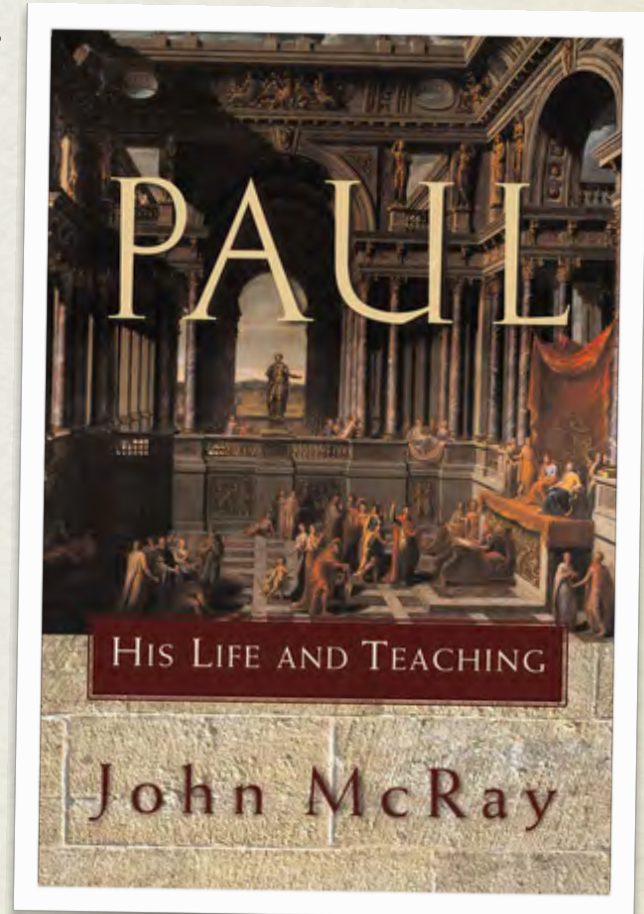


Like Hillel, Paul would take a more commonsense approach to matters . . . It was this mind-set, this more lenient approach to matters of law and grace, that eventually won out for Paul, overcoming his more strident background of strictness in biblical interpretation.



Paul, His Life and Teaching, John McRay, p.45

Providence is an altogether marvelous thing. How different history might have been had Paul come under the influence of the Shammai School rather than that of Gamaliel. Saul of Tarsus was just the man for whom God was looking at this point in history.



Paul, His Life and Teaching, John McRay, p.45

CONVERSION

Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

conversion is what *we* do
the new birth is what *God* does

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.

John 3:3, ESV

ELEMENTS OF CONVERSION

¹ Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest ² and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. ³ As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴ He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

⁵ "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked.

"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied.


Acts 9:1 - 5

ELEMENTS OF CONVERSION



Collision with
the Untamed
God

The key to understanding
salvation is “*Who are you?*”



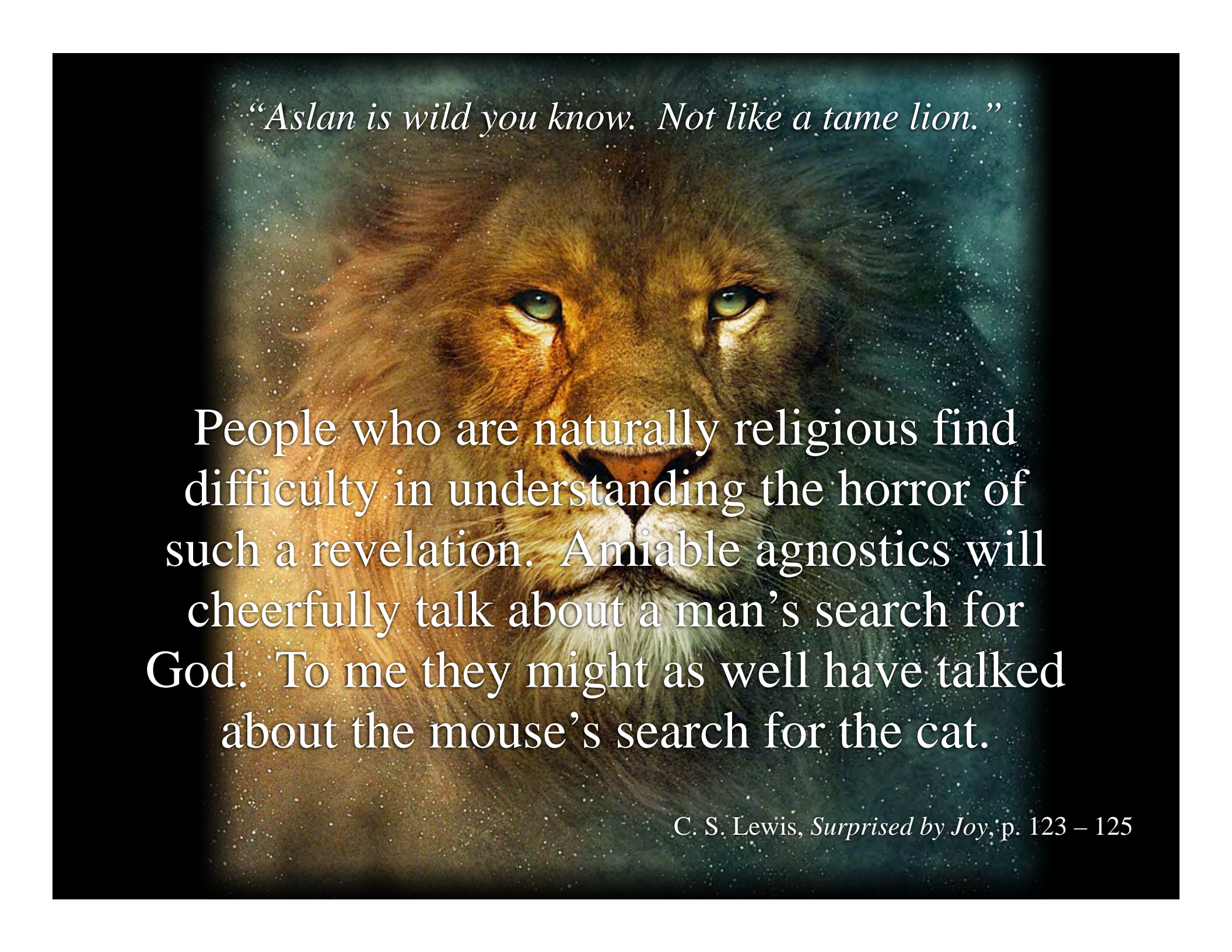
“Aslan is wild you know. Not like a tame lion.”

Before God closed in on me I became aware that I was holding something at bay, or shutting something out. I felt myself being, then and there, given a free choice. I could open the door or keep it shut. But I chose to open. Now I say, “I chose” yet it did not really seem possible to do the opposite.



“Aslan is wild you know. Not like a tame lion.”

I was allowed to play at philosophy no longer. It might, as I say, still be true that my “Spirit” differed in some way from “the God of popular religion.” My Adversary waived the point. It sank into utter unimportance. He would not argue about it. He only said, “I am the Lord”; “I am that I am”; “I am.”



“Aslan is wild you know. Not like a tame lion.”

People who are naturally religious find difficulty in understanding the horror of such a revelation. Amiable agnostics will cheerfully talk about a man's search for God. To me they might as well have talked about the mouse's search for the cat.

C. S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, p. 123 – 125

ELEMENTS OF CONVERSION

⁶ “Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.” ⁷ The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. ⁸ So Saul got up from the ground, but although his eyes were open, he could see nothing. Leading him by the hand, his companions brought him into Damascus. ⁹ For three days he could not see, and he neither ate nor drank anything.

Acts 9:6 - 9

ELEMENTS OF CONVERSION

Paradigm Shift

rethinking his understanding of God

rethinking his understanding of who he was

Philippians 3:4 - 6

⁴ If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵ circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless. (NIV)

Romans 7:24 & 25

²⁴ Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? ²⁵ Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. (NLT)

Philippians 3:7 - 9

⁷ I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. ⁸ Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ ⁹ and become one with him. I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God's way of making us right with himself depends on faith. (NLT)



All my acts, desires, and thoughts were to be brought into harmony with God. For the first time I examined myself with a seriously practical purpose.

And there I found what appalled me; a zoo of lusts, a bedlam of ambitions, a nursery of fears, a harem of fondled hatreds. My name was legion.



In the Trinity Term of 1929 I gave in, and admitted that God was God, and knelt and prayed; perhaps, that night, the most dejected and reluctant convert in all England.

C. S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, p. 125

ELEMENTS OF CONVERSION

¹⁷ So Ananias went and found Saul. He laid his hands on him and said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road, has sent me so that you might regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” ¹⁸ Instantly something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he got up and was baptized. ¹⁹ Afterward he ate some food and regained his strength.

Acts 9:17 - 19

ELEMENTS OF CONVERSION

A Radical New Relationship

Ananias laid his *hands on him*
called him *brother*
baptized him



To become new men means losing what we now call “ourselves”. Out of ourselves, into Christ, we must go. His will is to become ours and we are to think His thoughts, to “have the mind of Christ” as the Bible says.

C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, p. 240



Your real, new self (which is Christ's and also yours, and yours just because it is His) will not come as long as you are looking for it. It will come when you are looking for Him.

C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, p. 243



The principle runs through all life from top to bottom, Give up yourself, and you will find your real self. Lose your life and you will save it.

Submit to death, death of your ambitions and favorite wishes every day, and death of your whole self. In the end submit with every fiber of your being, and you will find eternal life. Keep back nothing.

C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, p. 243 - 244



Nothing that you have not given away will be really yours. Nothing in you that has not died will ever be raised from the dead.

Look for yourself, and you will find in the long run only hatred, loneliness, despair, rage, ruin, and decay. But look for Christ and you will find him, and with Him everything else thrown in.

