

# WESTERN WISDOM BIBLE STUDY

## Conversion of Saul



And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest.

And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven.

And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.

And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man; but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus.

And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.

And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized."—*The Acts*, 9-1-8; 18.

The life of Saul of Tarsus, including his latter years as St. Paul, is a mighty drama of the power of the Christ to transform and direct the nature of man.

Saul of Tarsus was among the most zealous of those who persecuted the Christians, even witnessing the stoning of the blessed St. Stephen, and "consenting unto his death." Blindly fanatical in his course against the followers of the crucified and risen Christ, Saul furiously refused the gently forgiving

admonitions of his best beloved friend, Barnabas, and of his revered teacher, Gamaliel, and pursued his misguided way.

So do many of those who have not yet "seen the light." The lives of such may be but narrow ruts, wherein they stumble along, oblivious to the tremendous abundance of life offered by the Christ Way of humble love and service. Creed may wall them in, and shut out the real significance of the Christian ideals of unity and brotherhood. Petty dogmas may bind the wings of the eternal Spirit, ever striving to unfold from out its prison house of flesh. Man-made conventions may bar the way to the free progress of the Spirit and invite the crystallizing forces of intolerance, pride, and selfishness.

Damascus represents a definite step on the Path of Initiation. Saul "was three days without sight," but he emerged from that period a new person. During those three days his consciousness was focused in the inner realms, and his spiritual powers were quickened. Truly, the scales fell from his eyes, and henceforth his extended powers were employed with a new zeal and selflessness in serving his fellow men. A new humility and compassion were his, and a burning love for *all* humanity became a characteristic of his new life in Christ, whom he resolutely heralded as "the Son of God."

In the life of every aspirant there must come the illumination signified by *Damascus*. At some point on his journey back to God each individual must orient his life so that he follows wholeheartedly the Path indicated by the greatest of all teachers. The powers of the Ego must become joyously dedicated to the Way of the Cross.