

Saul, Saul

“And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?” (Acts 9:4).

Years ago, while visiting a bookstore, I saw a little book entitled, “What The Clay Can Do With The Potter.” I somewhat respected the author but I suspiciously thumbed through the booklet. Yes, there were a few good thoughts here and there in the writing. But the basic concept was so faulty I became disillusioned with the material and the author and put it back on the shelf. In regard to this idea, my thoughts haven’t changed over the years.

Depicting clay as capable and authoritative is an erroneous line of thought. Everyone knows that clay will never leave its earthly environment on its own. It must be dug out of the earth by another force. Neither can the clay end up in the potter’s house without special assistance. It must be brought there by some other power. And clay cannot form itself into a useful vessel. That is the work of the potter himself.

What is true in the natural realm is also true in the spiritual world. Sinners cannot save themselves from their earthly captivity. They cannot move toward God and righteousness on their own. They cannot transform themselves into useful vessels in the kingdom of God. Only God can save, enable, and form us into what we ought to be! The call and conversion of Saul of Tarsus beautifully illustrates these truths.

The double-call to Saul speaks to us of divine sovereignty! Only God could bring down a wild man like Saul of Tarsus. His very breath had been murderous towards God’s people (see 9:1). Like a tornado, he blew through the church and left nothing but destruction and debris. But while Saul traveled to Damascus to do more damage, “light from heaven” (9:3) broke in on him, and “he fell to the earth.” There are none who can overcome the purposes of the sovereign God!

The double-call to Saul speaks to us of divine sensitivity! The further words of Jesus to Saul were in question form, “...why persecutest thou Me?” Hold it! I thought Saul had been persecuting believers. That’s right! The church was his target. But as Head of the church, His body, when Saul attacked the church, he was attacking Jesus. He is one with His people and identifies with us. He is sensitive to His mistreated body.

The double-call to Saul speaks to us of divine schemes! Saul was not called accidentally; he was called on purpose. The Lord told Ananias, who ministered to Saul as a new convert (see 9:10-18), “...he is a chosen vessel unto Me” (9:15). Not only were thousands converted through his ministry, but he also wrote much of the New Testament. Oh, may the Heavenly Potter help us realize how wide sweeping His schemes and purposes are in the world.