

PLOT TWIST

When God Surprises His People

Part 1: Lord of the Plot Twist

The conversion of Saul of Tarsus has been considered one of the most crucial events in the history of God's dealing with humanity. This man will dominate the rest of the book of Acts and, as the apostle to the Gentiles, lead the way in taking the gospel to the ends of the earth.

-- Ajith Fernando
The NIV Application Commentary

The turning of a Pharisaic persecutor into a Christian apologist and missionary is a profound paradox that requires study from multiple angles.

-- David G. Peterson
The Pillar New Testament Commentary

On the road to Damascus, Saul experienced a total conversion of will, intellect, and emotion which dictated the purpose and direction of his life and activity from then on.

-- F.F. Bruce, *New International Commentary on the New Testament*

As the Apostle Paul will soon learn, the Christian life invariably involved suffering. Paul will later write to the Philippians and tell them that they were called not only to believe in Jesus but also to suffer for his name. Why is suffering a part of the Christian life? Because, in a fallen world, suffering is the activity of love.

-- Ray C. Stedman
God's Unfinished Book

There is delicious irony in the persecutor of *The Way* finding that very moment when encountering Jesus along *the way*, the persecutor becomes the persecuted.

-- F. Scott Spencer, *Journeying through Acts: A Literary-Cultural Reading*

The active persecutor became an even more active preacher and evangelist, and he who made others suffer for calling upon the name of Jesus came to suffer himself for the sake of that name.

-- David G. Peterson, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary*

Another great inference from the fact that God takes the initiative to save the least likely people, such as Saul the persecutor, is that we cannot pronounce anyone hopeless as far as conversion is concerned.

-- Ajith Fernando
The NIV Application Commentary

I am the least of all the apostles. In fact, I'm not even worthy to be called an apostle after the way I persecuted God's church.

-- The Apostle Paul
2 Corinthians 15:9 (NLT)

You know what I was like when I followed the Jewish religion—how I violently persecuted God's church. I did my best to destroy it.

-- The Apostle Paul, **Galatians 1:13 (NLT)**

I was so zealous that I harshly persecuted the church. And as for righteousness, I obeyed the law without fault.

-- The Apostle Paul, **Philippians 3:6 (NLT)**

Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief.

-- The Apostle Paul,
1 Timothy 1:13 (TNIV)

And last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

-- The Apostle Paul
1 Corinthians 15:8 (TNIV)