

Conversion and Transformation: An evaluation of Paul's experience.

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Abstract

There can be no doubt that cognisance of Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus should be taken for any discussion on radical change. Bosch asked the question: Was it conversion in the sense of changing religions, or did Paul experience renewal from within the Judaistic religion? Exegetical and theological evaluation of Paul's experience show that careful scrutiny of his experience as narrated in Acts is needed. However, it is presently accepted that his own references to radical change in his views must be evaluated along with it. In this regard the Speech act theory empowers the exegete to better understand Paul's encounter with Christ. Especially the maxims of quantity, quality, relevance and manner and the basic aspect of politeness are useful to evaluate the meaning of a certain passage. The implications of Paul's encounter with Christ are huge and had and still has meaning for the Christian community. The radical transformation of the society that followed is of great importance. Paul's radical change had influence on the radical change of many in the society. What was the influence of Paul's encounter with Jesus for the whole community and how can this lead to new implications in the search for true Christian experience in the modern world? It is suggested that revisiting Paul's influence in the early church the present day church can transform society in a radical way.