

# Comparing Conversions Paul and Alma

| Conversion of Paul |          |          | Conversion of Alma                              |               |       |      |
|--------------------|----------|----------|---|---------------|-------|------|
| Acts 9:            | Acts 22: | Acts 26: |   |               |       |      |
| Acts               | Acts     | Acts     |   | Mos Alma Alma |       |      |
|                    |          |          | Three accounts                                  | 27:           | 36:   | 38:  |
| 1-2                |          |          | Seeking to destroy church                       | 8-11          | 6     |      |
|                    |          |          | Corrupting the people                           | 8-10          | 14    |      |
| 1-2                | 5        | 9-12     | Arresting and persecuting saints                |               |       |      |
| 3-8                | 6-11     | 13-19    | A heavenly vision of Jesus Christ               | 11-18         | 5-9   | 7    |
| 3                  | 6        | 13       | Light shining from heaven                       |               |       |      |
|                    |          |          | Whole earth did tremble                         | 11, 18        | 7     | 7    |
|                    |          |          | Thunderous voice                                | 11-18         | 7     | 7    |
| 4                  | 7        | 14       | Fell to the earth                               | 12, 18        |       |      |
| 4                  | 7        | 14       | "Why persecutest thou me?"                      | 13            |       |      |
|                    |          |          | "Why persecutest thou the church?"              |               |       |      |
| 5                  | 8        | 15       | "Who art thou, Lord?"                           |               |       |      |
| 6                  | 10       |          | "What wilt thou have me to do?"                 |               |       |      |
|                    |          |          | Warning of self-destruction                     |               | 9, 11 |      |
| 6                  | 10       | 16       | Told to arise                                   | 13            | 8     |      |
|                    |          |          | Commanded to repent                             | 16            |       |      |
| 7                  |          |          | Some hear, but do not see                       |               | 11    |      |
|                    |          |          | Some hear and see, but do not understand        | 12, 18        |       |      |
|                    | 9        | 13       | Some see, but do not hear                       |               | 11    |      |
| 9                  | 11       |          | Struck blind                                    |               |       |      |
|                    |          |          | Struck dumb                                     | 19            |       |      |
|                    |          |          | Overcome with weakness                          | 19            | 10    |      |
| 9                  | 11       |          | Without food or drink for three days            |               |       |      |
|                    |          |          | Immobile for three days                         | 23            | 10    | 8    |
|                    |          |          | Soul racked with torment                        | 29            | 12-18 | 8    |
|                    |          |          | Prayers of fasting and righteous                | 21-23         |       |      |
| 10-18              | 12-16    |          | God sends Ananias to heal                       | 21            |       |      |
| 18                 | 16       |          | Ananias invites to baptism                      |               |       |      |
|                    |          |          | Reborn of the Spirit                            | 24-30         | 18-19 | 6, 8 |
|                    |          |          | Declaration of repentant joy                    |               | 20-22 |      |
| 15-16              | 14-15    | 16-19    | Called to the ministry                          |               |       |      |
| 13-26              | 18-21    |          | Mistrust among the disciples                    |               |       |      |
| 20-30              |          |          | Proving discipleship                            |               |       |      |
|                    |          |          | Redeemed through Jesus Christ                   |               | 18-19 | 6, 8 |
|                    |          |          | Testimony of repentant convert                  | 30-31         | 22-30 | 4-6  |
|                    |          | 20       | Taught the gospel                               | 32-37         | 24-26 |      |
|                    |          | 31       | Maintained testimony in the face of persecution | 32            | 27    |      |

# Comparing Conversions Paul and Alma

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## Explanation

The conversions of Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus and of Alma the Younger in the land of Zarahemla are similar in certain fundamental respects, as one would expect since the source of their spiritual reversals was one and the same. Interestingly, in each case we have three accounts of their conversions: Paul's conversion is reported in Acts 9, 22, and 26. Alma's conversion is given in Mosiah 27, Alma 36, and 38. No two of these accounts are exactly the same. The columns on the far right and left sides of chart 15-17 show the verses of these six accounts in which each element either appears or is absent. Down the middle are found the elements shared by both Paul and Alma, and off center are words or experiences unique to either Paul or Alma. In sum, the personalized differences significantly offset and highlight the individual experiences in the two conversions.

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## Reference

Rex E. Lee, "Paul and Alma and Harold B. Lee: What Prophets and Common Sense Can Teach Us about Learning from Our Mistakes," *Brigham Young University Devotional and Fireside Speeches*, (Provo, Utah: BYU Press, 1993/94), 13–17.