

Acts 9, Part 3
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Acts 9 New International Version

9 Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest ² and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. ³ As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴ He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

⁵ "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked.

"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. ⁶ "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

⁷ The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. ⁸ Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. ⁹ For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.

¹⁰ In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!"

"Yes, Lord," he answered.

¹¹ The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. ¹² In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight."

¹³ "Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in

Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name.”

¹⁵ But the Lord said to Ananias, “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. ¹⁶ I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.”

¹⁷ Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” ¹⁸ Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, ¹⁹ and after taking some food, he regained his strength. Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. ²⁰ At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. ²¹ All those who heard him were astonished and asked, “Isn’t he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name? And hasn’t he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?” ²² Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Messiah.

²³ After many days had gone by, there was a conspiracy among the Jews to kill him, ²⁴ but Saul learned of their plan. Day and night they kept close watch on the city gates in order to kill him. ²⁵ But his followers took him by night and lowered him in a basket through an opening in the wall.

²⁶ When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. ²⁷ But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus. ²⁸ So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. ²⁹ He talked and debated with the Hellenistic Jews,^[a] but they tried to kill him. ³⁰ When the

believers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.

³¹ Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers.

³² As Peter traveled about the country, he went to visit the Lord's people who lived in Lydda. ³³ There he found a man named Aeneas, who was paralyzed and had been bedridden for eight years. ³⁴ "Aeneas," Peter said to him, "Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and roll up your mat." Immediately Aeneas got up. ³⁵ All those who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.

³⁶ In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (in Greek her name is Dorcas); she was always doing good and helping the poor. ³⁷ About that time she became sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room. ³⁸ Lydda was near Joppa; so when the disciples heard that Peter was in Lydda, they sent two men to him and urged him, "Please come at once!"

³⁹ Peter went with them, and when he arrived he was taken upstairs to the room. All the widows stood around him, crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them.

⁴⁰ Peter sent them all out of the room; then he got down on his knees and prayed. Turning toward the dead woman, he said, "Tabitha, get up." She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up. ⁴¹ He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet. Then he called for the believers, especially the widows, and presented her to them alive. ⁴² This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord. ⁴³ Peter stayed in Joppa for some time with a tanner named Simon.

Acts Chapter 9 – Part 3

Review of Parts 1 & 2

- There's been a stunning development in the life of the early church: Saul, who had been adamantly opposed to Christianity, who had approved the stoning of Stephen, who was on his way to Damascus to round up and imprison followers of Christ, has received a revelation of the risen Jesus and was now a fellow brother and believer.
- We're reminded that nothing is too difficult for God, that the Lord knows how to get our attention, that God moves in ways that are beyond our expectations, comprehension and imagination.
- We see the importance of exercising obedience and humility towards God.
- We recognize that like Ananias, as followers of Jesus we can hear the Lord's voice as he calls us as we are receptive and keep in step with God's Spirit.
- We can trust for scales to be removed from our eyes to receive a clear vision and renewed perspectives spiritually and relationally.
- We acknowledge that as vessels for God, holy, set aside for his use and his special purposes for us, we are molded and shaped, like clay in the hands of a potter. To be shaped, to be pulled and stretched and molded by God, we must be soft and pliable in the Lord's hands. We must yield to Him. And as vessels we are filled up by the Holy Spirit and poured out to do his will.

Acts 9:19b-31 – Part 3

- Saul demonstrated that Jesus is the Messiah
 - The word Christ is derived from the Greek word *khristos* and Messiah is derived from the Hebrew *meshiach* word; they are transliterations that mean The Anointed One, which is the King. They poured oil on the heads of kings to anoint and declare and install them as king, so the anointed one is the king.
 - We need to understand who the Messiah is: Isaiah 9:6-7 (NIV) ⁶ For to us a child is born,

to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
⁷Of the greatness of his government and peace
there will be no end.
He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.
The zeal of the LORD Almighty
will accomplish this.

- The Lord is a Counselor – a Planner Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)
¹¹For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.
- Saul proclaims that Jesus is the Son of God.
 - Huge leap in understanding that Jesus is both Messiah and the Son of God. In Jewish writings, God sent wisdom into the world as his “second self.” The language of God sending his Son into the world (Romans 8:3) paralleled this. He sent Jesus, God in human form.
- The Jews plotted to kill Saul
 - To escape, the disciples let him down through a wall lowering him in a basket. Sometimes our assignment is to flee. We may need help from our friends to escape.
- Back in Jerusalem the disciples were afraid of Saul
 - Barnabas came to his defense. Saul's reputation was renewed. A good reputation is valuable: Proverbs 22:1 – A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold.
- In Jerusalem, the Hellenistic Jews tried to kill Saul. His family sent him to Caesarea, they sent him to Tarsus
- The church in Judea, Galilee and Samaria was at peace
- The church was built up and grew in numbers
 - Living in the fear of the Lord

- Fear here is reverence for God and a desire to both do what pleases him and not do what displeases Him.
 - Find out what pleases the Lord. Ask God what his will is for you. Ephesians 5:-8-10; New International Version:
⁸For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light ⁹(for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) ¹⁰and find out what pleases the Lord.
- Living in the comfort of the Holy Spirit
 - John 14:26-27 (NIV) ²⁶But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. ²⁷Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.
 - 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (NIV) New International Version ¹⁹Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; ²⁰you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.