

The Book of Acts; Lesson #5— The Conversion of Paul

Get Scriptures to read. Acts 9:1-20

Memory Verse

Acts 9:15 (NKJV) *But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.*

Persecutor of the Church

1 Corinthians 1:23 (NKJV) *but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness,*

Acts 8:3 (NKJV) *As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison.*

Acts 22:3 (NKJV) *“I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers’ law, and was zealous toward God as you all are today.*

Galatians 1:14 (NKJV) *And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.*

Acts 22: 4–5 *I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women,⁵ as also the high priest bears me witness, and all the council of the elders, from whom I also received letters to the brethren, and went to Damascus to bring in chains even those who were there to Jerusalem to be punished.*

Acts 26:9–11 (NKJV) *“Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.¹⁰ This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them.¹¹ And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities.*

***1 Timothy 1:13 (NKJV)** *although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.*

Philippians 3:6 (NKJV) *concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.*

2 Chronicles 33:1- chapter 34

On the Damascus Road

“Saul had taken a prominent part in the trial and conviction of Stephen, and the striking evidences of God’s presence with the martyr had led Saul to doubt the righteousness of the cause he had espoused against the followers of Jesus. His mind was deeply stirred. In his perplexity he appealed to those in whose wisdom and judgment he had full confidence. The arguments of the priests and rulers finally convinced him that Stephen was a blasphemer, that the Christ whom the martyred disciple had preached was an impostor, and that those ministering in holy office must be right.”— The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 112, 113.

Acts 9:3–9 (NKJV) *As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven.⁴ Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?”⁵ And he said, “Who are You, Lord?” Then the Lord said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads.”⁶ So he, trembling and astonished, said, “Lord, what do You want me to do?” Then the Lord said to him, “Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”⁷ And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no one.*

Acts 22:9 *“And those who were with me indeed saw the light and were afraid, but they did not hear the voice of Him who spoke to me.*

John 12:28–29 *“Father, glorify Your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, saying, “I have both glorified it and will glorify it again.”*

²⁹ *Therefore the people who stood by and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to Him.”*

⁸ *Then Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened he saw no one. But they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus.⁹ And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.*

Acts 26:14–18 (NKJV) *And when we all had fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’¹⁵ So I said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And He said, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.¹⁶ But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you.¹⁷ I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you,¹⁸ to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.’*

***1 Corinthians 9:1 (NKJV)** *Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord?*

Soon after Augustine's conversion, he was walking down the street in Milan, Italy. There he accosted a prostitute whom he had known most intimately. She called but he would not answer. He kept right on walking. "Augustine," she called again. "It is I!" Without slowing he called back yes, but it is no longer I."

Ananias' Visit

Conversion does not mean that everything is different but that everything is surrendered to God's will.

Acts 9:10–16 (NKJV) *Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord." ¹¹ So the Lord said to him, "Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying. ¹² And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he might receive his sight." ¹³ Then Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name." ¹⁵ But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. ¹⁶ For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake."*

Acts 22:12–16 (NKJV) *"Then a certain Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good testimony with all the Jews who dwelt there, ¹³ came to me; and he stood and said to me, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight.' And at that same hour I looked up at him. ¹⁴ Then he said, 'The God of our fathers has chosen you that you should know His will, and see the Just One, and hear the voice of His mouth. ¹⁵ For you will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. ¹⁶ And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.'*

The Beginning of Paul's Ministry

Acts 9:19–25 (NKJV) *So when he had received food, he was strengthened. Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus. ²⁰ Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God. ²¹ Then all who heard were amazed, and said, "Is this not he who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem, and has come here for that purpose, so that he might bring them bound to the chief*

priests?" ²² But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this Jesus is the Christ. ²³ Now after many days were past, the Jews plotted to kill him. ²⁴ But their plot became known to Saul. And they watched the gates day and night, to kill him. ²⁵ Then the disciples took him by night and let him down through the wall in a large basket.

Paul who was a warrior against the Gospel became a soldier for it.

What Jesus did for Paul he does in essence for each of us. He meets us in the road as an obstacle to our own destruction. He reveals His glory, He invites us to change our course.

Church Barriers

Acts 9:21 (NKJV) *Then all who heard were amazed, and said, "Is this not he who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem, and has come here for that purpose, so that he might bring them bound to the chief priests?"*

***Galatians 1:1** *Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead),*

Acts 9:26 (NKJV) *And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and did not believe that he was a disciple.*

Paul's conversion was so radical even the church could not believe it! Devil tried to use the Church to discourage him.

Return to Jerusalem

Acts 9:26–28 (NKJV) *And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and did not believe that he was a disciple. ²⁷ But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. And he declared to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. ²⁸ So he was with them at Jerusalem, coming in and going out.*

After you are saved you may need to start your ministry at home.

Billy Graham set down next to a man that was planning to be a great missionary. The famed evangelist asked him how many people he had reached in his neighborhood. If you cannot reach your neighbor how do you expect to reach foreigners in a strange land?

Galatians 1:18–19 (NKJV) *Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days. ¹⁹ But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother.*