

**"The Conversion of Saul"**

**Part 5**

**Acts 9**

**Introduction:** When we left Saul last week he was still blind from his experience with the Lord on the Damascus Road. Ananias had been chosen by the Lord to deliver a message to Saul concerning his ministry. Ananias was a prominent Jew in Damascus, and he was a believer. Therefore he was probably a man that Saul had his sights set on when he would arrive at Damascus.

**Acts 22:11-12**

*<sup>11</sup> And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus.*

*<sup>12</sup> And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there,*

It is important to note that after Ananias and Saul meet in Damascus and Ananias does what the Lord calls him to do, he is never mentioned again. He rises to the surface for this particular meeting with Saul and then we see him again no more. We can assume that Ananias continued to serve but we have no idea if he and Saul ever had contact again. He had been called for a certain mission and he proved to be obedient.

**Application:**

God can use us for a long season, or He may put you here for a specific mission and when it is finished, He may take you home. One example would be John the Baptist. He came to be the front runner for Jesus and then he was killed. Others like Noah, Moses, Abraham and many others live to serve for extended periods of time. This is why it is so important to do all we can while we are able.

**Ecclesiastes 9:10**

*<sup>10</sup> Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.*

**Psalms 90:10-12**

*<sup>10</sup> The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.*

<sup>11</sup> *Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath.*

<sup>12</sup> *So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.*

This now brings us to where we are tonight.

### Receiving His Sight and God's Direction

#### Part 2

#### Notice Acts 9:17-18

There are several points to consider in these two verses. First of all there are those who say that this is the moment that Saul was saved. They would point to the scales falling from his eyes and the filling of the Spirit. I personally would disagree with that conclusion. I believe Saul was saved on the Damascus Road when He met the Lord. Let us remember that salvation is by grace THROUGH FAITH plus nothing. When Ananias called for Saul to be filled with the Holy Spirit, he was speaking of being controlled by the Spirit, not being indwelt by the Spirit. They are two different things. All believers are indwelt by the Spirit but not all believers are filled with the Spirit.

#### Ephesians 5:17-19

<sup>17</sup> *Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.*

<sup>18</sup> *And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;*

<sup>19</sup> *Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;*

To be "filled with the Spirit" here does not mean to be saved and we know that because Paul was writing to believers. To be filled with the Spirit is to be controlled by the Spirit instead of being controlled by the flesh.

#### Notice Acts 9:17 again.

For Saul to be filled by the Spirit was for him to be controlled for the mission which he was called for.

#### Notice Acts 9:18 again.

We see in this verse that Saul was baptized before he did anything else. There are those who teach that he was not saved until he was baptized and they point to Acts 22.

#### Acts 22:2-6

<sup>12</sup> And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there,

<sup>13</sup> Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him.

<sup>14</sup> And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.

<sup>15</sup> For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.

<sup>16</sup> And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

We know that Saul was saved before he was baptized because baptism is an out demonstration of what has happened to a person when they were saved. Baptism is the very first step of obedience after a person is saved.

The scales falling from Saul's eyes were a picture of how his view of everything, especially the Lord, would now change. Notice the words of Phillips.

*"When brother Ananias touched Saul's blinded eyes and the scales fell away, his whole outlook had changed. Instead of hating Jesus, he loved Him. Once a persecutor of the faith, he now became a professor and a propagator of the faith. Once a despiser of the Lord, he was now a disciple of the Lord. Once a destroyer, he was now a devotee. Once an assailant, he would soon become an apostle. Once he had held the clothes of Stephen's executioners. Now he was ready himself to be slain for Jesus. Saul was converted. He became a "new creature in Christ."*

Application:

This is what happens when a sinner is saved today. Everything changes. The way we see things changes; priorities all change.

## **2 Corinthians 5:17**

<sup>17</sup> Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

## **Notice Acts 9:19**

Here is a change in Saul's life that happened immediately. The very people he had set out to persecute he is now gathered together with, and they certainly now have a common ground.

**Ephesians 4:4-6**

<sup>4</sup> *There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;*

<sup>5</sup> *One Lord, one faith, one baptism,*

<sup>6</sup> *One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*

Saul was now one with those whom he intended to kill.

**1 John 3:14**

<sup>14</sup> *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.*

We also see in verse 9 that Saul was strengthened. We will also see in verse 22 that he will be strengthened again. Saul would learn from both of these that his strength came from the Lord.

**Philippians 4:13**

<sup>13</sup> *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*

When we are determined to walk in obedience to the Word of God and go out and fulfill the Great Commission, the Lord will provide the strength that we need to serve Him. Not only will He provide the strength, but He will also provide the open doors/opportunities.

**Psalm 37:23**

<sup>23</sup> *The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.*

**Proverbs 16:9**

<sup>9</sup> *A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps.*

Not only does the Lord open doors but He also closes them at times. We see all of this in Acts 16.

**Acts 16:6-10**

<sup>6</sup> *Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia,*

<sup>7</sup> *After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.*

<sup>8</sup> *And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas.*

<sup>9</sup> *And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.*

<sup>10</sup> *And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.*

**Notice Acts 9:20**

Saul wasted no time. He knew the practice in the synagogues that there was time given to any able Jewish man to speak from the Scriptures. He took advantage of this open door immediately. If we notice the verse closely, we see that Saul preached "Christ." This name means "Anointed One" and it is naming Jesus Christ as the Messiah and King. Then in this verse we see also that Saul preached Christ that He is the Son of God. The Jews would have fully understood what this meant.

**John 5:18**

<sup>18</sup> *Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.*

The Jews understood that when Jesus called God His Father that He was saying that He was equal with God meaning that He was God. When Saul preached Christ that He is the Son of God he was saying that Jesus is God, and the Jews would have fully understood what he was proclaiming. He was saying, "The One whom we hated, and the One whom we crucified was god in the flesh. He was the Messiah, the King and the Lord of all." He was also saying, "The people who followed Him who we hated, who we persecuted, and who we killed were absolutely correct about who He is!"

**Notice Acts 9:21**

The people who heard Saul were amazed! This was the man who had come to Damascus to persecute the followers of Jesus and now he was proclaiming that Jesus is the Son of God. What a change God had brought about in Saul. This was all for God's glory.

**Galatians 1:23-24**

<sup>23</sup> *But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.*

<sup>24</sup> *And they glorified God in me.*

**Application:**

We know that God longs to see all people saved and God also delights in using people whom are saved when there is an opportunity to magnify the contrast of change in their lives.

**1 Corinthians 1:26-31**

*<sup>26</sup> For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:*

*<sup>27</sup> But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;*

*<sup>28</sup> And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:*

*<sup>29</sup> That no flesh should glory in his presence.*

*<sup>30</sup> But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:*

*<sup>31</sup> That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.*

**Conclusion:**

**Notice Acts 9:22**

From the start Saul began to grow in grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. All the Old Testament training that he had was now coming into clear view as he could see Jesus Christ in the Old Testament.

**Application:**

What model conversion this is for us today. It is for us to be saved and then to proclaim the name of Jesus Christ and to grow in grace and knowledge. His is what is needed in the churches today, deeper believers.

**2 Peter 3:17-18**

*<sup>17</sup> Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.*

*<sup>18</sup> But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.*