

Building the Church

Acts 9:1-31

Lesson 7

The last time we saw Saul he was guarding the clothes of those who stoned Stephen. Now we find him as he is traveling on his way to further persecute Christians. It is on this trip that he will have an unexpected and life changing encounter with the Lord.

OBSERVATION: Read Acts 9:1-31

1. After reading through these verses, what would you say to someone if they asked you what they are about?
2. Key words help us to better understand the verses. We have listed below a group of key words. Mark each one in a distinctive way
Key Words: Jesus, Holy Spirit, Saul, apostles, disciples, Ananias, Barnabas, brethren and baptized
3. The contrasting word *but* was used eight times in Acts 9, mark each time the word is used. Choose one of those times and record what is being contrasted.

But -

SAUL, THE PERSECUTOR: Read Acts 9:1-2

1. How is Saul described in these verses?
2. Compare what we know about Saul from Acts 8:1-3 and Acts 9:1-2.
 - A. How have things changed?
 - B. What do you think caused this?

THE DAMASCUS ROAD EXPERIENCE: Read Acts 9:3-9

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1. What happened as Saul came near Damascus?

2. Acts 9:4-6 reveals Jesus' conversation with Saul. Record their words.
 - Jesus (verse 4)
 - Saul (verse 5)
 - Jesus (verse 5)
 - Saul (verse 6)
 - Jesus (verse 6)

3. What did Jesus accuse Saul of doing? Verse 4
 - a. Persecute means to pursue in order to harm. How does Zechariah 2:8 help you understand the effect harming God's people has on Him?

 - b. What does Matthew 25:40 add to this idea?

4. Saul was familiar with the name Jesus. He may have heard Peter share about Him as he spoke before the Jewish council in Acts 5. He certainly heard Stephen speak of Him. His reaction to their preaching may have given them the impression that their words were not getting through to Saul. What does Isaiah 55:11 proclaim about God's word?
 - a. What encouragement can we learn from this when we may not see the reaction we hoped for from those with whom we share the gospel?

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5. *"It is hard for you to kick against the goads."* A goad was a wooden shaft with a pointed end. A person working with an ox would use the goad to direct the ox when it was being stubborn or contrary. The more the ox would rebel the deeper the goad would go. The more the animal rebelled, the more the animal suffered. How might this explanation describe Paul's reaction to the preaching of the gospel?
 - a. How have you discovered God's word to be a goad in your life?
 - b. What happens when you kick against the goad of God's Word?
6. Saul, although he may have been a man filled with pride, asked Jesus a question that revealed his humility. What was it? Verse 6
7. Beginning with Jesus' response in verse 6, summarize what happened next. Verses 6-9

Challenge: Read Paul's account of this event in Acts 22:4-11 and add any supplemental information.

GOD'S CHOSEN VESSEL: Read Acts 9:10-19

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1. The Lord told Ananias to inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus. What had Ananias heard about Saul?

2. What did the Lord tell Ananias about Saul? Verses 15,16
 - a. Why do you think this would be difficult for Ananias?

3. According to verse 17, why had the Lord sent Ananias to Saul?

4. After receiving his sight, and being filled with the Holy Spirit, Saul was baptized. Then he received food and was strengthened. What did he do next?

5. How are the scales being removed from Paul's eyes an illustration of what happens to a person when they believe in Christ?

PAUL, THE NEW DISCIPLE: Read Acts 9:20-30

1. After spending some days with the disciples in Damascus, what did Saul do?
 - a. What was unique about Saul's testimony?

 - b. What is unique about your testimony?

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- c. How did the people respond to Saul's preaching? Verses 21,22
2. Using Acts 9:23-25, describe the plot to kill Saul and what the disciples did to help him escape.
3. Saul left Damascus for Jerusalem. What was his reception by the disciples in Jerusalem like? Verse 26
 - a. We were introduced to Barnabas in Acts 4 as one of the believers who sold their land to give to the church. What do we find him doing in Acts 9:27-28?
 - 1.) What impresses you about Barnabas?
 - 2.) How could a person like Barnabas help heal wounds in a church group?
 - 3.) How can you be more like Barnabas?
4. Again, Saul spoke boldly and again, there were those who attempted to kill him. What did the brethren do when they found out? Verse 30
 - a. What lessons can we learn from the examples of Barnabas and these other brethren?

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THE CHURCH PROSPERS: Read Acts 9:31

1. Acts 9 closes with the statement *that the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified*. What two things were they walking in?
 - a. In what way are others drawn to people who live like this?

REVIEW: Read Acts 9:1-31

1. What lessons did you learn from:
 - Saul
 - Ananias
 - The believers in Damascus and Jerusalem
 - Barnabas
2. How has your life changed since Jesus you became a Christian?
3. Paul began immediately to serve The Lord. How can you get more involved in serving Christ?