

# ACTS

## Chapter 9

### Note from Kathy

*This chapter contains one of the greatest conversion stories in the Bible. Saul was no average man who responded yes to Christ. He was a “Christ-hater” who was dramatically changed by God. What is your salvation story? Try to find someone today or tomorrow to share how you came to know Christ.*



### Observation

#### ▣ Acts 8:1-3

*“On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. <sup>2</sup>Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him. <sup>3</sup>But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison.”*

#### ▣ Acts 9:3-4

*“As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. <sup>4</sup>He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?’”*

1. Things had gotten very difficult for the believers in Jerusalem. Stephen had been stoned to death and many others had been locked up. Acts 9 begins with a description of Saul, he was the man who had been left to watch the coats for those stoning Stephen. What did you learn about Saul in Acts 8:1-3?  
  
Look at the map on question 14 to see how far this man’s hatred would carry him. Acts 9 tells us Saul was prepared to travel from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ and back, in order to imprison Christ followers.
2. The event in verse 9:3 is nothing short of amazing grace on display. A bright light shone all around Saul and a voice spoke to him. Who was speaking to him? \_\_\_\_\_  
  
What question was Saul asked?
3. What had happened to Saul that immediately caused him to depend on others? How long did this last?

**9 Acts 9:13-16**

*"Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup>And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name.' <sup>15</sup>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. <sup>16</sup>I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.'"*

**10 Acts 9:18**

*"Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized..."*

**11 Acts 9:23-25**

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

4. There was a believer named Ananias living in Damascus at that time. What did the Lord tell this man to do?

Do you suppose this was an easy assignment? Use verses 13-16 to explain your answer.

5. Obedience is a beautiful thing. Ananias got up and did just what the Lord told him to do. When the two men met, what did Ananias call Saul?

How do you imagine Saul felt having Ananias treat him with such kindness?

What miracle happened when Ananias placed his hands on Saul?

6. We do not want to miss a very important event in verse 18. What did Saul do as a sign of loyalty and obedience to his new life?
7. There are times when putting the past in the past is a difficult assignment. What did the men in verses 21-22 know about Saul? What was their response to his preaching?
8. Saul was not only a Pharisee, he was the son of a Pharisee, so it was not unusual that he would be allowed to preach in the synagogue immediately. He knew the prophecies, and he had studied the scriptures most of his life. Who did he now know that would only make his preaching and teaching better?
9. Things in Damascus were not that different for Saul than things had been for Jesus in Jerusalem. Even though Saul is a fellow Jew and a Pharisee, what is the mood toward him?
10. How motivated are these Jews to carry out their plans?
11. The believers in Damascus did not want to see Saul harmed. To what lengths did they go to protect their new brother in Christ?
12. Saul made his way to Jerusalem but when he arrived what was their understandable response?

**Acts 9:26-31**

*“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.<sup>27</sup> 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.<sup>28</sup> So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord.<sup>29</sup> He talked and debated with the Hellenistic Jews, but they tried to kill him.<sup>30</sup> When the believers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.<sup>31</sup> Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened.”*

**Acts 9:32**

*“As Peter traveled about the country, he went to visit the Lord’s people who lived in Lydda.”*

**Acts 9:34-35**

*“Aeneas,’ Peter said to him. ‘Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and roll up your mat.’ Immediately Aeneas got up.<sup>35</sup> All those who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.”*

**Acts 9:39, 40**

*“Peter went with them, and when he arrived he was taken upstairs to the room...<sup>40</sup> 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.”*

13. Barnabas trusted God and got to know Saul and then brought him to the apostles. Because Barnabas believed him the other followers gave him a chance. How effective was Saul’s ministry? Often the effectiveness of the work can be measured by the opposition of the enemy.
14. Locate the below cities and provinces on the map. Mark the cities with one color of highlighter and the provinces with another color.

Cities

- Jerusalem
- Damascus
- Caesarea
- Tarsus

Provinces

- Judea
- Samaria
- Galilee



15. Israel is made up of three distinct areas. Judea (south), Galilee (north) and Samaria (central). What did Acts 9:31 say the believers living in these areas enjoyed at this time?

This was a period of growth for the church. Believers were strengthened and encouraged by the Holy Spirit and the church grew in numbers as many others came to believe.

16. The remainder of this chapter is about Peter. What do we find Peter doing?
17. Peter met a man named Aeneas. What was his situation?
18. What did Peter say to him?
19. What affect did this amazing miracle have on the people of that area?
20. There was a woman named Tabitha, living very near Joppa, who continually gave of her time, talent and finances to help others. What happened to Tabitha?
21. The people of Joppa quickly sent for Peter. Describe what he saw when he arrived, what he did and what affect it had on the people who lived around Joppa?

## Application

1. John MacArthur's commentary on Acts 9 says, "It is fitting that such a unique individual would have a unique conversation. Saul was by birth a Jew, by citizenship a Roman, by education a Greek, and purely by the grace of God a Christian." Try to find someone this week and briefly share the details of your conversion. What were you doing when you heard God speak to you?

What was your life like prior to meeting the Lord? (Be brief; never glorify sin only the grace that saved you from your sin.)

2. Did God provide someone like Ananias for you—someone to help you grow in your newly found faith?

What are some of the qualities, actions and habits you observed from this friend?

3. Do you have close Christian friends like Ananias, who will stop everything to pray with you and for you?

Are you willing to do this for others?

Are you willing to be this kind of friend?

4. Scripture tells us that after Saul's conversion, he got up and ate and then spent time with the disciples that lived in Damascus. Why do you think he needed to spend time developing a relationship with them?

Relationships with other believers are an important part of our walk of faith. Who are some of the believers that encourage you?

Who are you building up?

If you are doing this study, you have probably joined one of our WTW small groups and you are studying God's word together. This is an important step to growing in your walk of faith. When we develop friendships with others who have chosen to follow Christ and together seek to know him, the Bible calls it "iron sharpening iron."

5. The believers in Jerusalem were understandably afraid when Saul came back and tried to meet with them. But Barnabas stepped out

**Acts 4:36**

*“Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means ‘son of encouragement.’)”*

**Psalms 56:4**

*“In God, whose word I praise—in God I trust and am not afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?”*

**Psalms 56:11**

*“In God I trust and am not afraid. What can man do to me?”*

**Psalms 118:6**

*“The LORD is with me; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?”*

**Hebrews 13:6**

*“So we say with confidence, ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?’”*

by faith and listened to his testimony. He took the time to hear his heart. We have heard of Barnabas before. Look back at Acts 4:36. Describe Barnabas in a few words.

- a.
- b.
- c.

Which of these qualities are you interested in developing?

6. Saul spoke boldly in Jerusalem. He talked and debated with many Jews about Jesus. Many of these were the same Jews he had stirred up to hate believers. Sadly, they were unwilling to hear his new message. What did these men want to do to Saul?

Do you suppose these threats and murderous plans caused Saul any sleepless nights?

Read Psalms 56:4, 11, Psalms 118:6 and Hebrews 13:6. God had just begun to use Saul. Was there anything to fear?

If we are doing what God has called us to do, is there anything for us to fear?

7. Acts 9:32-35 tells us about the apostle Peter and his first few missionary opportunities outside Jerusalem. When he arrived in the town of Lydda he met a paralyzed man. The man had been paralyzed for eight long years. By what authority did Peter instruct this man?

Are you going about your day with the knowledge that as a believer in Christ you have this same authority?

8. Peter’s time in Lydda and Joppa had a profound and eternal effect on the people there. Think of the places you have been the last couple of weeks and the people you have encountered. What effect has your presence had on those who were with you?