

Acts 9:1-31 **Conversion of Saul – His ministry in Damascus and Jerusalem**

To Damascus with authority of the High Priest

¹ Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest ² and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

Saul met Jesus on the road to Damascus

³ And 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?" And 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?" And 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. 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.

Ananias sent to heal Saul

¹⁰ 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."

¹⁷ And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit."

¹⁸ Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized. ¹⁹ So when he had received food, he was strengthened. Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus.

Saul's ministry in 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.

Escape in a basket

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.

Saul's ministry in Jerusalem

26 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. 29 And he spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus and disputed against the Hellenists, but they attempted to kill him. 30 When the brethren found out, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him out to Tarsus.

Churches multiplied in peace

31 Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied. NKJV

Facts Revealed:

Saul began Assault on the Church

- ✚ As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison. [Acts 8:3]
- ✧ In his zeal, thinking He was doing God a service, Saul persecuted believers viciously fulfilling the words of Jesus saying, "They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service". [John 16:2, Acts 8:3, 22:19-20]

Saul on his way to Damascus with authority of the High Priest

- ✚ Then **Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord**, went to the high priest and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were "**of the Way**," whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. [Acts 9:1-2]
- ✧ In his zeal to destroy the Church, which Saul (a Pharisee) considered to be enemies of God, Saul sought and received letters of authority from the High Priest in Jerusalem to search out the Christians (people of the Way) from the synagogues of Damascus, and bring them back bound to Jerusalem for trial and execution.
- ✧ Damascus is the capital city of Syria.
- ✧ The people Saul would be arresting would be Jews who worshiped God in the Synagogues, yet believed in Jesus as the Messiah.

Saul met Jesus on the road to Damascus

- ✚ And as he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" And the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads." [Acts 9:3-5]
- ✧ Jesus appeared to Saul in intensely bright light from Heaven that blinded him, Brighter than the sun at midday. [Acts 9:3, 27, Acts 22:6, 26:13, 1 Corinthians 9:1]
- ✧ The light shone around Saul but did not blind the others who were with him. [Acts 9:3-9]
- ✧ Jesus is the Light. [John 1:1-9, Daniel 2:22, 1 Timothy 6:16, 1 John 1:5, Revelation 21:23]
- ✧ The voice spoke in the Hebrew language. [Acts 26:14]
- ✧ The voice was the voice of Jesus asking Saul, "Why are you persecuting Me."
 - ✧ Persecuting the Church is directly persecuting Jesus Himself. [Matthew 25:40]
 - ✧ Jesus clearly identified Himself as Jesus, Whom Saul is persecuting when he is persecuting the Church of Believers "of the Way."

- ✧ It is hard when we find ourselves kicking against the Will of God (goads).
- ✚ So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" And the Lord said to him, "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." [Acts 9:6]
 - ✧ The miracle was real and personal, and it caused Paul to fall helpless to the ground blind.
 - ✧ All Saul could then do was to ask the voice what was required.
 - ✧ He was to go to Damascus and wait for some one to tell him what next to do.
- ✚ And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no one. 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. And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank. [Acts 9:7-9]
 - ✧ Those with him heard the voice but did not see anyone. [Acts 9:7]
 - ✧ Those with him saw the light but did not hear the voice. [Acts 22:9]
 - ✧ They led Saul, who was without sight, by the hand into Damascus where he fasted for three days without food or drink.

Ananias sent to heal Saul

- ✚ 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." 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. 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." [Acts 9:10-12]
 - ✧ Jews were living in Damascus of Syria and had built a Synagogue in which to worship the God of Israel. They had been scattered around the world by the various wars throughout their history, and others had gone on their own, but they kept in touch with Jewish worship at the temple in Jerusalem. Wherever the Jews were scattered around the world, they kept their religious traditions and teachings of Judaism and the Torah.
 - ✧ Disciples had fled from the persecution in Jerusalem as far as Damascus in Syria.
 - ✧ Ananias was selected by the Lord Who came to him in a vision to send him to Saul of Tarsus and giving him the address of the house where he could be found.
- ✚ Then Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name." [Acts 9:13-14]
 - ✧ Ananias knew about Saul, his work and his purpose for coming to Damascus.
 - ✧ It is only natural to be cautious with someone who is alone the greatest threat to your beliefs and survival.
- ✚ 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. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake." [Acts 9:15-16]
 - ✧ God knows the heart, and commitment to a task of Saul, and the change that would take place after this encounter.
 - ✧ Saul was chosen by God to perform a task that the other Apostles could not do.
 - ✧ Many sufferings and trials lay ahead for the man, and God knew that Saul was able to face them all successfully to the end.
 - ✧ Saul had demonstrated the zeal to serve the Lord that was in his heart, by his relentless attack against the Church, he only needed to know the will of God in reality and untainted by the traditions of the Pharisees.
- ✚ And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." [Acts 9:17]

- ✧ Ananias accepted God's reason and did as the Lord had commanded.
- ✧ Saul was to receive his sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit when Ananias laid his hands on Saul.
- ✚ Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized. So when he had received food, he was strengthened. Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus. [Acts 9:18]
 - ✧ Saul was immediately found to be a changed man when the hands were applied.
 - ✧ Sight restored, Saul was immediately baptized in obedience to the command of Jesus.
 - ✧ Strengthened by food after the three day fast, Saul stayed some time with the disciples at Damascus, apparently accepted in fellowship in the Church in Damascus.

Saul's ministry in Damascus

- ✚ Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God. [Acts 9:20]
 - ✧ Being filled with the Holy Spirit, Saul was able to convincingly prove by Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. [Acts 9:20, 17:2-3, Romans 1:1-4, 16:26-27, 1 Corinthians 15:3-4]
- ✚ 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?" [Acts 9:21]
 - ✧ Those who heard Saul after his conversion, were amazed at his reversal and bold proclamation of the name of Jesus Christ proving that Jesus is the Son of God.
- ✚ But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this Jesus is the Christ. [Acts 9:22]

Escape in a basket

- ✚ Now after many days were past, the Jews plotted to kill him. [Acts 9:23]
 - ✧ The Jews in Damascus were following the same traditions as the Jews in Jerusalem and their response was the same.
 - ✧ The war is that of a spiritual battle between the traditions of man and the Will of God. [Matthew 15:2-6, Mark 7:3-9]
 - ✧ It was the zeal for the traditions of the Jews that was the basis for killing Jesus, and Stephen. It was also the basis for Saul's authority and trip to Damascus in the first place. [Acts 9:1-2]
- ✚ But their plot became known to Saul. And they watched the gates day and night, to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night and let him down through the wall in a large basket. [Acts 9:23-25]

Saul's ministry in Jerusalem

- ✚ 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. 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. [Acts 9:26-27]
 - ✧ The disciples in Jerusalem knew the old Saul and were afraid of him until Barnabas brought him to them and they learned of his conversion.
- ✚ So he was with them at Jerusalem, coming in and going out. And he spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus and disputed against the Hellenists, but they attempted to kill him. [Acts 9:28-29]
 - ✧ Saul again in Jerusalem demonstrated boldness of the Holy Spirit as he spoke of the Lord Jesus and disputed against the Hellenists.
 - ✧ Again an attempt was made on the life of Saul, this time by the Hellenists.
- ✚ When the brethren found out, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him out to Tarsus. [Acts 9:30]

- ✧ Tarsus was home town for Saul, so they sent him home until the turmoil subsided. [Acts 9:11]

Churches multiplied in peace

- ✧ Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied. [Acts 9:31]
- ✧ In the absence of the dynamic zealous influence of Saul from their midst, the Church was able to flourish in peace throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria.
- ✧ They multiplied, being edified, and walking in the fear of the Lord in the comfort of the Holy Spirit.
- ✧ A time of peaceful growth settled over the region.