



ACTS 9:1-19

THE CONFRONTATION AND CONVERSION OF SAUL

SAUL'S PERSECUTION OF FOLLOWERS OF JESUS CONTINUES (9:1-2)

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

- Luke leads into a new story of Saul, picking up where he left off
 - Acts 8:1–3
- Saul's pious indignation against followers of Jesus moved him beyond threats to steps of violent brutality, arresting and executing some of them
- In Saul's mind, he's protecting the Judaism from distortions
 - Acts 26:9–11
- Saul seeks, and is granted, the authority of the Jewish rulers to arrest Jewish followers of Jesus congregating in Damascus
 - "The Way" is a unique reference to those no longer following the customs of Judaism
 - It may be descriptive of people finding their sole access to God the Father, through Jesus
 - John 14:6

JESUS CONFRONTS SAUL ON THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS (9:3-9)

³ Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. ⁴ And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” ⁵ And he said, “Who are you, Lord?” And he said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. ⁶ But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.” ⁷ The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. ⁸ Saul rose from the ground, and although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. So they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. ⁹ And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

- Saul makes his way north, around 135 miles, to Damascus to deal with the church forming there
- The Lord Jesus makes a dramatic appearance to Saul during his journey
- The Lord repeats his name making sure Saul knows he is the one being addressed

JESUS CONFRONTS SAUL ON THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS (9:3-9)

- “*why are you persecuting me*” – indicates how Jesus identifies with His followers
- “*Who are you, Lord?*” – Saul is not affirming divinity, but uses *Lord* as a term of respect
- “*I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting*” – he is forced to realize Jesus is the Lord of glory
- His passionate life is misguided and condemned, and Saul is made to own it
- Saul is wrong and Jesus required him to admit it
- The temple soldiers accompanying Saul know something shocking happened
 - Saul remains blinded in Damascus for three days and he took no food or drink during that time
 - Saul is forced to do much soul searching under the disciplining hand of the Lord
 - Confrontation and repentance can be painful

ANANIAS COMMISSIONED BY THE LORD TO RESTORE SAUL'S SIGHT (9:10-16)

¹⁰ Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord." ¹¹ And the Lord said to him, "Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, ¹² and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight." ¹³ But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at 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 instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. ¹⁶ For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name."

- *"a disciple at Damascus named Ananias"* – Luke identifies one of the followers of Jesus in Damascus as Ananias
- *"Lord, I have heard from many about this man"* – Saul's hostile reputation precedes him
 - Ananias is aware Saul is on a mission from the authorities in Jerusalem to imprison followers of Jesus
 - Ananias knew of Saul's hatred and abuse of believers, and he may have known some of them personally
 - God's grace can forgive and transform vile sinners
 - We who have been forgiven much, must also be grateful when the Lord transforms our enemies

ANANIAS COMMISSIONED BY THE LORD TO RESTORE SAUL'S SIGHT (9:10-16)

- Ananias is to communicate the Lord's healing grace as well as the Lord's specific commission for Saul
 - The Lord's gospel grace brings dramatic changes to lives
 - The Jewish leader's chosen instrument of destruction and death becomes the Lord's chosen instrument to spread the gospel throughout the world
- Saul becomes a fulfillment of the prophecy concerning Isaiah's ministry
 - Isaiah 49:6
- As Paul and Barnabas evangelize Jews and Gentiles in Antioch, this passage in Isaiah is specifically applied to their ministry
 - Acts 13:46–48
- Saul knows from the outset what his mission will be on earth

ANANIAS COMMISSIONED BY THE LORD TO RESTORE SAUL'S SIGHT (9:10-16)

- *16 For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name. – Saul “must suffer” for the name of Jesus*
- Saul, who brought affliction to believers in early churches, will experience much affliction because of his commitment to share the gospel
 - 2 Corinthians 11:21–28
- Saul will know great suffering as a faithful servant of the Lord, and we are promised suffering as well
 - 1 Peter 4:12–14

SAUL IS HEALED PHYSICALLY AND EMPOWERED SPIRITUALLY (9:17-19)

¹⁷ So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” ¹⁸ And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized; ¹⁹ and taking food, he was strengthened. For some days he was with the disciples at Damascus.

- Ananias is obedient to the instruction of the Lord and heads to the house where Saul resides
- Faith in the Lord’s words are made evident by how Ananias addresses Saul – “*Brother Saul*”
- God supplies healing grace and Saul has no hesitation in identifying with his Lord and Savior, Jesus, in baptism
- Fellowship over food and truth unites Saul with followers of Jesus in Damascus
- There is no heart so hard that God’s gospel grace in Christ cannot transform it
- Enemies of truth become champions of truth!

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- How are you walking in faith, believing that the Lord is in our midst, a Mighty One who will save?
- How is the Lord confronting you and your misdirected life?
- In what ways are you experiencing the sight of conversion?
- Are you sharing your Damascus Road experience with others?
- Why is it important for you to trust the power of God to bring gospel transformation to your enemies?



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