



Acts

Study Pack 10

Pastor Paul Julian

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Acts Chapter 9

We're about to see the salvation of Paul, or Saul of Tarsus. No one saw this coming. No one predicted this one. And yet, that is the power of the gospel.

Acts 9:1–2

And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, ² And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

Which, by the way, Damascus is a good _____ miles away. And what is he desiring letters for? To go and arrest more Christians.

“We've got to stop these people. This is wrong.”

He was so convinced.

This is a really neat little tidbit in scripture in the New Testament. It's not only neat, it gives more dimension to what was going on, what was happening.

What was ‘this way’? See, the believers of this time were known by this name: _____.

John 14:6

⁶ *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

This way to heaven, this way to salvation, this way to redemption was through Jesus. And even to the people who hated them, which Saul very much did at this point, even they referred to these people as the people of _____. Isn't that cool? So, just even the hatred that they received, it was a compliment and a statement of what they were doing.

Paul's passion as a Pharisee was so wrong, yet he was so _____. He was sincere and convinced that Christians deserved to die because of their blasphemy of God. He really believed he was upholding the honor of his God. He truly did. He thought this was the right thing to do.

Acts 9:3

³ *And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:*

We don't know the exact place, of course, where these next verses took place, but we know that it was on a road near Damascus. And this would have been the view as you came to where you could see the city of Damascus. And this is a real place.

Acts 9:4

⁴ *And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?*

I've got to believe Saul is thinking at this moment, “Wait a minute, wait a minute, wait a minute. What? Why am I persecuting you? I'm defending you. Lord, I'm doing your work, ”

Acts 9:5

⁵ *And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.*

Do you see what just happened? He is told by God, “Why are you persecuting me?”

He's thinking, “Wait a minute, God, that false one, Jesus— No, I'm helping You, God. I'm defending You, God.”

And so he says, “Who art thou, Lord?”

And what does He say? “I am Jesus” declaring that the One Who was crucified is alive. Do you see this moment of truth for Saul?

Saul has been _____ this. God's been trying to reach out to him through the gospel, through the stoning of Stephen and other things. Saul was only _____ himself by kicking against the truth when he claimed that Jesus could not be the Messiah.

When you kick against a prick, it doesn't feel good. You're hurting yourself.

At this point, Saul physically sees with his own eyes Jesus and he recognizes the _____. He's gloriously saved. No one saw this coming. No one would have predicted this.

And Paul recounts this experience, by the way, two other times as he gives his testimony in the book of Acts. And it's very clear, Saul was a brilliant man, but he was lost. He was on his way to hell.

Acts 9:6

⁶ *And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.*

Believe me, this is a glorious salvation at this point. He's not sure where to go from here, but he knows for a fact that the very One Who he was convinced that he needed to make sure no one believed in, that no one was mistaken, that no one was fooled – don't you dare believe that this Jesus was the Messiah – he now realizes that that very Jesus Who was crucified is alive and He's the Son of God.

And believe me; he knew the Old Testament scriptures. He knew all of those truths. And now he has that same moment that so many other Jewish people have had. And it's the reality that that was the Messiah.

This is no doubt _____ the _____ time that God tried to reach Saul. We've talked about that before, the stoning of Stephen. He had been kicking against the truth. And at this very moment, he trusts Christ. He believes in the Messiah.

Acts 9:7

⁷ *And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.*

Later on in chapter 22 of Acts, it says that those who were with him did not hear the voice, but they did see the light. And we'll talk about that. It's not a contradiction, but I want to make you aware of it.

And it does make it clear that those who were with him _____ the words, but he did. So they heard a sound, but they didn't hear the words. We'll clarify that in chapter 22.

Acts 9:8

⁸ *And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus.*

He's blind and confused, but he has now got the best sight he's ever had. He's seen Jesus. He has the truth. He knows that Jesus was the son of God.

Acts 9:9-11

⁹ *And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.* ¹⁰ *And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord.* ¹¹ *And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth,*

Now don't go too far forward here. Think about what was just done. Ananias, a believer in God, has in this vision the Lord telling him, "I've got a job for you. Get up, go to the street, go to the certain house owned by Judas, and you're going to go talk to Saul of Tarsus."

Acts 9:12-13

¹² *And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.* ¹³ *Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem:*

And that's an important word because why? There are people who would teach that the church itself is only of _____ and only the writings of _____ should be taught. It's a crazy doctrine, And so this verse disproves that by saying that there are saints before Paul is even in the picture. Well, he got saved, but these guys were clearly saved before that.

And there was a _____. That's what the saints are a part of. Saints before Paul means the church began before Paul, Also another thing that people will use this is that ultra-dispensationalism where they try to make these little mini-dispensations between when the church started and Paul's now going to start the church.

No, the church started at _____. And this is just the transition period of it going through. It's not a separate dispensation. Keep reading.

Acts 9:13-14

¹³ *Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem:* ¹⁴ *And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.*

Do you realize what he is saying? He's saying Ananias who's from Damascus, he knew what we read earlier that Saul had gone to the authority to get permission to persecute, go round up Christians in Damascus and bring them back to Jerusalem. This guy knew that.

So clearly they knew _____ Saul was and the word was spreading, "Heads up, this guy's out there; he's rounding up Christians, "

So he's reacting probably how most of us would: "Are you kidding me? You want me to go talk to this guy?"

Acts 9:15

¹⁵ *But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:*

Chosen what? Chosen to _____ unto me,

This is just my opinion. I find it somewhat interesting that the very next verse, Ananias says, “Yes, I’ll go.”

What was the last thing God told him before he said he would go? The fact that he would show Paul how much he would _____. Again, I’m not claiming that I know that’s what Ananias was thinking, but I know for me, if it was like, “Yeah, you know what, God’s will for Saul of Tarsus is that he’s going to suffer. All you know what? I’ll go talk to him because I think it’s about time that he had a little suffering after what he’s done to us.”

Again, I’m adding that to the scripture. But what is clear, there’s two assignments. Number one, the suffering is going to come and Paul suffered. What did Paul’s suffering bring? _____ to _____.

What was a chosen vessel to? Well, it says that he was going to go to these three groups, the _____, the _____, and _____. And we’re going to see later on, when Paul would go to a new town, he’d go to a new city, he always started in the synagogue. He always talked to the Jews first and gave the gospel to the Jews first.

And by the way, when God tells you what to do, when you know what God’s will is, when you know it’s clear what you’re supposed to be doing for God, just do it. You don’t have to pray about _____ what God’s will is when you already _____ what God’s will is.

Acts 9:17

¹⁷ And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.

He says, “Brother Saul.” That means that he took God at His Word that this man is saved. This is a brother in Christ.

He believed what God told him about Saul. I also wonder if it helped Ananias that when he walked in that this man who had been killing people was blind.

“So, well, I’ve at least got a few minutes until his sight comes back as I walk in.” I don’t know. He probably didn’t think that. It’s just probably my crazy thinking.

He’s saying the same Jesus who you saw on the road to Damascus has sent me that thou mightest receive thy sight and be filled. What I want you to know here is that what was he filled for? He’s filled for _____.

We keep seeing that difference between _____ of spirit and _____ of spirit. And so he’d already been indwelt by the Holy Spirit on the road to Damascus. He’s already got the Holy Ghost. But he’s saying that thou mightest receive thy sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost. How do you help someone get filled with the Holy Ghost? You help them learn and understand how to _____ to the Holy Spirit.

That’s what discipleship is all about.

Acts 9:18–20

¹⁸ And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized. ¹⁹ And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. ²⁰ And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.

The same guy who just a few days earlier has written permission and authority from the priests in Jerusalem to go and gather up Christians in Damascus to kill them or to imprison them is now _____ in the _____ that Jesus is the Son of God.

Only through the power of the gospel, only through Christ transforming someone's life can this happen. Immediately he preached the gospel. What a dramatic turn.

When you see Jesus and you believe in him and you fully give your life to God, amazing things will happen. Amazing things will happen.

Acts 9:21

²¹ But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?

Can you imagine the chatter amongst the believers? And you know this spread everywhere.

“Are you sure? Saul, the same Saul that I know, the same Saul that we've known, ”

Acts 9:22

²² But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.

Listen, this guy knew the Old Testament scriptures in and out. He knew them backwards and forwards, but he was _____. He was lost. He had rejected Jesus as that Messiah, and now that he's put that together, look out.

They don't have a chance standing up against this guy. Now, this is something that you really need to understand this process, and this is something where we're looking at the book of Acts. We're getting a historical picture. If you look at verse 23, we just read 22. Saul is increasing more in his strength. He's confounded the Jews. And if you look at verse 23, what does it say?

Acts 9:23

²³ And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him:

What does that mean? Well, we're not getting the whole picture here in Acts, so turn your Bible to Galatians chapter 1. We're going to read these verses quickly for time's sake, but you have to see this. You have to understand this.

Saul spends _____ in Arabia, and this is where that happens, but you don't get that full picture from here in Acts. Remember when I talked about in the intro to this study, to this class, that Acts is sort of that hub of the wheel to kind of make everything make sense.

Galatians 1:11–17

¹¹ But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. ¹² For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. ¹³ For ye have heard of my

conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: ¹⁴ And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. ¹⁵ But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, ¹⁶ To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: ¹⁷ Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.

It was directly through Jesus Christ. It makes sense with what we just read in Acts. Let's keep going.

Verse 13. He was zealous, all And verse 15. Do you see what he's saying? I trusted Christ as my Savior.

This came through this direct moment on the road to Damascus. It was revealed, but then when the apostles and those who were in Jerusalem, he says, "I didn't go back there. I went to Arabia."

So Paul starts in _____, went to _____, and then we're going to see when we go right back to Acts, he's right back in _____, So keep reading.

Galatians 1:18-24

¹⁸ Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. ¹⁹ But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother. ²⁰ Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not. ²¹ Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia; ²² And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ: ²³ But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed. ²⁴ And they glorified God in me.

You see what these people knew of him? They had not really seen him by face. They'd heard of this happening, but they didn't know. So it's important to understand this in the _____ because Paul shows back up on the scene in Damascus, and Acts is going to just pick up right where that was, right after he got back from Arabia.

It's not that he didn't have the Holy Spirit. It's not that he wasn't teaching in the power of God and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. He was.

But remember, what was the real concentrated _____ time for Peter and John and those guys after the resurrection? It was between the resurrection and the ascension, 40 days.

What did it say that Jesus was talking about with them? Explaining the kingdom. He was helping them understand things that no way could they understand before the death, burial, and resurrection.

Look how many times when Christ is talking to the disciples before He dies, look how many times that it says He explained this and He explained this, and what was the result? They all nodded their head and said, "Yeah, we got it."

No. Most of the time, they were _____. They didn't _____.

That's how the verses end. And you're like, "Well, is he getting anywhere?" Well, Christ knew. It's almost going to be impossible for them to fully understand this until they see Him die, they see Him buried, and they see Him rise again.

So that's why you've got those 40 days of concentrated _____ going on to say, "Here's how the kingdom works. Here's how this is going to happen."

How did that work for Saul? Going off to Arabia, where, through the Holy Spirit, he is being taught.

And we see that later on where Paul actually mentions that specifically as to learning these things about the church. Because what you're going to see Paul do from now on is just incredible.

It doesn't mean he wasn't using Peter, it doesn't mean he wasn't using those men. He was, very greatly. Without those guys, there is no Paul. But the fact is, is that he's going to lay down the _____ of the church, the workings of the growing in Christ, the two natures, _____ by faith, and all these different things.

And through all of his writings in the New Testament, how does he know all that? How does he get all that? Well, he spent this time in that _____, and of course, obviously, inspired through the Holy Spirit. Make sense? So there's that little window in the book of Acts. He's off in Arabia, and here we come back.

Acts 9:23

²³ And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him:

So, sound familiar? I mean, it's like, here we go again. The very one who was the one doing the killing, now they want to _____ him.

And you can imagine, and I think scripture is clear that really actually shows, bears this out. The hatred for him was almost greater than some of the others.

Why? Because they knew how _____ his testimony was because he was the one that was champion of the fact that, "No, this can't be the Messiah. Here's why, here's why, here's why. Let's kill these people."

When that guy got saved, when that guy is now saying, "No, those prophecies were talking about Jesus' Messiah, our Messiah was going to be foretold to be a suffering Messiah." It's a powerful testimony.

Acts 9:24-25

²⁴ But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. ²⁵ Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket.

As a kid, I loved this story. As an adult that has been in ministry for a good number of years now, can I tell you something? Serving God is fun. Crazy things happen. I could tell you story after story after story, whether it's an everyday ministry or missions trips or building projects, things happen that are just like, did we just do that?

Acts 9:26

²⁶ And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.

No kidding. Because remember, what did Saul say just a little bit ago? He'd been gone to Arabia, but there are a whole lot of people that only _____ of this.

They'd never saw him face-to-face, so they believed not that he was a disciple. They just didn't believe it, and can you blame them? In other words, these were real fears. How could this Saul possibly be trusted? But here comes _____.

And who was Barnabas? Remember that very, very generous gift that was given way, way back? They had all things in common, and way, way back, people were selling property, and that's what Barnabas was one of those main ones that's listed right before Ananias and Sapphira happened.

Acts 9:27

27 But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.

I think when you have a sponsor and his name is Barnabas, you're in _____ . He said, "If you understood the boldness with which he preached in Damascus, you would know this is for real."

Don't confuse boldness with rudeness and cockiness. They are not the same thing. Boldness in Christ is not rudeness and cockiness.

Barnabas puts his armor on Paul and helps him as he enters into this new group of men who didn't trust him. He is willing to vouch for Paul and defend him. What a great friend. What did they call Barnabas? The _____ .

Acts 9:28–30

28 And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem. 29 And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him. 30 Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.

Again, those are the Jewish people who lived, they were raised in Greek cities, but they're _____ people.

Were there times where God said, "It's my will for you to stay put?" Yes. Remember when he broke Peter and John out of prison. What did He say, "Head for the hills?" No. "Go back to the temple and start preaching."

But God was leading in this way, send him forth to Tarsus, which we know is his hometown.

Acts 9:31

31 Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.

The church just keeps growing. It's amazing, isn't it?

And so we're going to pick up in verse 32, and we're going to see a shift here of ministry. Remember, we talked about Peter having the _____ to the kingdom or the keys to opening up. He was the man that God used to open these doors of the gospel, of access to the kingdom, to these different people. We're going to see this happen here.

Acts 9:32–34

32 And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all quarters, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda. 33 And there he found a certain man named Aeneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy. 34 And Peter said unto him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately.

People are getting saved in droves. I mean, this is spreading like wildfire.

We see in the book of Acts that God is using these sign gifts to confirm His _____ and to confirm His _____.

Remember, this particular messenger, Peter, is one of the authors of the New Testament. These writers have to have God's confirmation, and you're seeing that happening. That's also why you're just seeing this just explosive evangelism going on. It must have been a thrill.

Acts 9:36

³⁶ Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did.

And we find out in the context in other places that she was sewing clothes for those in need, mostly _____. She was making clothing for them. And what a great ministry.

Acts 9:37–38

³⁷ And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid her in an upper chamber. ³⁸ And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring him that he would not delay to come to them.

Remember, he went down. You always, when you leave Jerusalem, you always go down, and you see Lydia, and then you see Joppa there right on the coast.

So they know that Peter's nearby, and they say, "Let's get him here."

Acts 9:39

³⁹ Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them.

And while they were weeping, what were they doing? They were showing Peter the coats and garments which Dorcas made while she was with them.

They were showing Peter, like, "Can you help us? This woman meant so much to us. She helped us. When nobody else helped us, she helped us. She made clothing for us."

She obviously had the funds and the money to do that. As a matter of fact, the fact that there is a _____, it's not that the small houses didn't have that, or people with less means didn't have that, but it seems to be implied that this was a larger area.

She _____ these hurting widows, and when you see the emotions that they're showing, you see the grief that they're showing, you realize the hole that she left, the crater that she left behind in their lives.

Acts 9:40-41

⁴⁰ But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up. ⁴¹ And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive.

It's like: "If it's not enough to just tell you that Saul of Tarsus got saved, let's tell you another story of what happened. People are being raised from the dead. People are being healed of palsy. The lame are walking."

God's work is just exploding through this area. We see, again, this sign gift, is being done by the apostle to _____ that God's hand is on them. Very important, and you're going to hear me keep saying that as we see some of these miracles.

Acts 9:42

⁴² And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord. ⁴³ And it came to pass, that he tarried many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner.

God's work is on a roll, and it just keeps rolling.

We can't go back and say, "Well, let's duplicate all these things now."

We can't do that. We're not supposed to do that, but what we are supposed to do is to be _____ by these things. It's the very same God, and by the way, is there any less meaningful moment when a person comes to Christ now than it did then? No, it's the same glorious moment when someone comes to Christ.

Would it be fun to get a call and say, "Hey, Pastor Paul, would you mind? I know you're in the area. You know, would you come on by? We've got this lady that died, and you could bring her back to life."

It'd be fun. It'd be cool. I'm not going to lie, I'd love to do that, but why was that happening? Just for it to be this exciting thing? No, it was for the _____ of who these men were, what they were teaching, what they were writing.

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