

SESSION 10: NOVEMBER 25
CALVARY METHODIST CHURCH
ACTS CHAPTER 9 – 10 NOTES AND COMMENTARY

The Damascus Road: Saul Converted

(Read Galatians 1:11-21)

The most important event in human history apart from the life, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth is the conversion to Christianity of Saul of Tarsus. If Saul had remained a Jewish rabbi, we would be missing thirteen of twenty-seven books of the New Testament and Christianity's early major expansion to the Gentiles. Humanly speaking, without Paul Christianity would probably be of only antiquarian or arcane interest, like the Dead Sea Scrolls community or the Samaritans.

Saul the Enemy (9:1-2)

READER 9 -1 Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest² 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.

3 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?" **Who are you, Lord? Is he simply addressing the heavenly being with respect** Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads." **the voice asks, Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? Jesus identifies with his disciples, his body (see Lk 10:16; Acts 1:1; 9:1; 1 Cor 12:27; Eph 4:12). Gamaliel's worst fears have materialized (Acts 5:39)**

READER **6** So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" Then **the Lord said** to him, "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." (Notice the Lord directs the action by one task at a time. The holy Spirit prompts us to move forward in faith without knowing the eventualities.)

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.

Later in the Book of Acts Paul gives his own testimony of his conversion: READ Acts 22:3-21)

Ananias Baptizes Saul (Philip' and Ananias' ministry reveals A new insight into baptizing i.e. a disciple has complete authority to baptize a person that they convert)

READER 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."

The Lord makes all of the necessary connections supernaturally:

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."

READER 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 Preaches Christ

READER 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.** (the Promised Messiah is the correct emphasis to all Jewish believers)

Saul Escapes Death in the city of Damascus

READER 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. (So Saul escapes from the Jews who seek his death in Damascus)

Saul at 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.

READER

27 But Barnabas took him and brought *him* to the apostles. (24 entries of Barnabas in Acts) 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.

The Church Prospers - Peter heals Aeneas in Lydda

READER 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.

32 Now it came to pass, as Peter went through all *parts of the country*, that he also came down to the saints who dwelt in Lydda. **33** There he found a certain man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden eight years and was paralyzed. **34** And Peter said to him, “Aeneas, Jesus the Christ heals you. (The apostle Peter gives a command in an active form) Arise and make your bed.” Then he arose immediately. **35** So all who dwelt at Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord. (Lydda is east from the port of Joppa in Northern Judea and 9 miles from Tel Aviv.)

Dorcas Restored to Life

READER 36 At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, (remember women were equal partakers in ministry as disciples, all believers are disciples.) which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did. **37** But it happened in those days that she became sick and died. When they had washed her, they laid *her* in an upper room. **38** And since Lydda was near Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent two men to him, imploring *him* not to delay in coming to them. **39** Then Peter arose and went with them. When he had come, they brought *him* to the upper room. And all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them.

READER 40 But Peter put them all out, and knelt down and prayed. (??? prayed, and why the others out?) And turning to the body he said, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. **41** Then he gave her *his* hand and lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her alive. **42** And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed on the Lord. **43** So it was that he stayed many days in Joppa with Simon, a tanner.

CHAPTER 10: Cornelius Sends a Delegation

READER 10 There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment, **2** a devout *man* and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always. **3** About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming in and saying to him, "Cornelius!" **4** And when he observed him, he was afraid, and said, "What is it, lord?"

So he said to him, "Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God. **5** Now send men to Joppa, and send for Simon whose surname is Peter. **6** He is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea. He will tell you what you must do."

The Spirit prepares Cornelius' and Peter's Vision –

READER 7 And when the angel who spoke to him had departed, Cornelius called two of his household servants and a devout soldier from among those who waited on him continually. **8** So when he had explained all *these* things to them, he sent them to Joppa. (Cornelius sends 3 men) **9** The next day, as they went on their journey and drew near the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour. **10** Then he became very hungry and wanted to eat; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance **11** and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth. **12** In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. **13** And a voice came to him, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat."

READER 14 But Peter said, "Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean."

15 And a voice *spoke* to him again the second time, "What God has cleansed you must not call common." **16** This was done three times. And the object was taken up into heaven again. (3 symbolizes perfection, completeness or fullness, it is a spiritual number, it represents aspects of creation, like birth, life, death) Summoned to Caesarea

17 Now while Peter wondered within himself what this vision which he had seen meant, behold, the men who had been sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate.

READER 18 And they called and asked whether Simon, whose surname was Peter, was lodging there.

19 While Peter thought about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are seeking you. **20** Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them."

21 Then Peter went down to the men who had been sent to him from Cornelius, and said, “Yes, I am he whom you seek. For what reason have you come?” **22** And they said, “Cornelius *the* centurion, a just man, one who fears God and has a good reputation among all the nation of the Jews, was divinely instructed by a holy angel to summon you to his house, and to hear words from you.” **23** Then he invited them in and lodged *them*. On the next day Peter went away with them, and some brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

READER Peter Meets Cornelius **24** And the following day they entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them, and had called together his relatives and close friends. **25** As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped *him*. **26** But Peter lifted him up, saying, “Stand up; I myself am also a man.” **27** And as he talked with him, he went in and found many who had come together. **28** Then he said to them, “You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean. **29** Therefore I came without objection as soon as I was sent for. I ask, then, for what reason have you sent for me?”

READER **30** So Cornelius said, “Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, **31** and said, ‘Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your alms are remembered in the sight of God. **32** Send therefore to Joppa and call Simon here, whose surname is Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea. When he comes, he will speak to you.’ **33** So I sent to you immediately, and you have done well to come. Now therefore, we are all present before God, to hear all the things commanded you by God.”

Preaching to Cornelius’ Household (Peter Presents the essential Gospel)

READER **34** Then Peter opened *his* mouth and said: “In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. **35** *But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.* **36** The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all— **37** that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: **38** how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. **39** And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they [e] killed by hanging on a tree. **40** Him God raised up on the third day, and showed Him openly, **41** not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, *even* to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. **42** And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God *to be* Judge of the living and the dead. **43** To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins.” (Peter Presents the essential Gospel)

The Holy Spirit Falls on the Gentiles

44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. **45** And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. **46** For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.

HERE AGAIN IS EVIDENCE OF THE OUTPOURED HOLY SPIRIT

AGAIN THE IMMEDIATE FOLLOW UP TO CONVERSION FOR A BELIEVER IS WATER BAPTISM

Then Peter answered, **47** “Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we *have*?” **48** And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.