



ACTS - Living in the Promises of Jesus

Acts 9:1-31

Lesson 7

In our last exposure to Saul, we found him guarding the clothes of those who had gathered to hear Stephen's defense and to stone him for the words he preached. Then one day, on the road to Damascus, as he was bent on destroying those who named the name of Jesus, Jesus revealed Himself to Saul, and Saul was never the same.

OBSERVATION: Read Acts 9:1-31

1. Read through this week's verses using both your Observation Worksheet (the last page of this homework) and another Bible translation or paraphrase. After reading through these verses, what would you say to someone if they asked you what they are about?
2. Key words help us to better understand the verses. We have listed below key words. Mark each one in a distinctive way (either with a symbol, highlighting, or some form of boxing, circling, or underlining). Mark each of the key words each time they are used in the text. Remember to mark any personal pronouns that refer to *Jesus*, *Holy Spirit*, or any people who have been designated as key words.
Key Words: *Jesus*, *Holy Spirit*, *Saul*, any references to believers (*apostles*, *disciples*, *Ananias*, *Barnabas*, *brethren*), and *baptized*
3. The contrasting word *but* was used eight times in Acts 9:1-31. Mark each time the word is used. Choose one of those times and record what is being contrasted.
4. Record the questions asked in Acts 9:4-6.

SAUL, THE PERSECUTOR: Read Acts 9:1,2

1. Acts 9:1,2 reveals to us a man no longer content to watch others stone believers. How is Saul described in these verses?
2. Rather than make excuses for his behavior, choose two of the following verses and record Saul's own admission of his guilt.
Acts 22:4, Acts 26:9-11, 1 Corinthians 15:9, Galatians 1:13, 1 Timothy 1:13
3. Whenever confronted with the truth, the human heart either softens in submission or hardens in its resolve against what it knows is right. What was the result of hearing Stephen's words according to Acts 7:54?
 - a. Have you ever been *cut to the heart*? If so, describe some of your thoughts and feelings?
 - 1.) How did you respond?
 - b. The sense of being *cut to the heart* is often the result of conviction. Define the word *conviction*.
 - 2.) How can *conviction* be a good thing?
 4. Consider 1 Timothy 1:13. Although Saul was committing atrocious sins, what did he say about himself?
 - a. What did Saul not *believe*?
 - b. What do you think Saul did *believe* that would incite him to act the way he did?
 5. What does this say to you about the possibility of your own blindness to God's ways?

THE DAMASCUS ROAD EXPERIENCE: Read Acts 9:3-9

1. What happened as *Saul came near Damascus*?
2. Acts 9:4-6 reveals Jesus' conversation with Saul. Record their words.

Jesus (verse 4)

Saul (verse 5)

Jesus (verse 5)

Saul (verse 6)

Jesus (verse 6)
3. What did Jesus accuse Saul of doing? verse 4
 - a. The word *persecute*, in its most basic sense, means to pursue. When translated in a positive sense, it is written as *follow*. When translated in the negative sense, it means to pursue to do harm. How does Zechariah 2:8 help you understand the effect harming God's people has on Him?
 - b. Add the truth of Matthew 25:40
4. Saul's response in Acts 9:5 is one of respect. What did Saul call Jesus in this verse and in verse 6?
 - a. Saul was familiar with the name *Jesus*. He may have heard Peter share about Him as he spoke before the Jewish council in Acts 5. He certainly heard Stephen speak of Him. His reaction to their preaching may have given them the impression that their words were not getting through to Saul. What does Isaiah 55:11 proclaim about God's word?
 - b. What encouragement can we learn from this when we may not see the reaction we hoped for from those with whom we share the gospel?

5. Look at the sentence *It is hard for you to kick against the goads*. A large percentage of people in the first century were tillers of the soil. Oxen were used to work the soil. The prick or *goad* was a necessary device. The prick was usually a wooden shaft with a pointed spike (prick) at one end. The man working the ox would position the *goad* in such a way as to exert influence and control over the ox. You see, if the ox refused the command indicated by the farmer, the *goad* would be used to jab or prick the ox. Sometimes the ox would refuse this incentive by kicking out at the prick. As a result, the prick would be driven deeper into the flesh of the rebellious animal. The more the animal rebelled, the more the animal suffered. How might this explanation describe Paul's reaction to the preaching of the gospel?

a. Solomon knew *goads* to be a good thing. What did he write in Ecclesiastes 12:11?

b. How have you discovered God's word to be a *goad* in your life?

1.) What happens when you *kick against the goads*?

6. Saul, although he may have been a man filled with pride, asked Jesus a question that revealed his humility. What was it? verse 6

a. Notice Saul did not make excuses nor did he justify his behavior. What can we learn from his example?

7. Beginning with Jesus' response in verse 6, summarize what happened next. verses 6-9

Challenge: Read Paul's account of this event in Acts 22:4-11 and add any supplemental information.

GOD'S CHOSEN VESSEL: Read Acts 9:10-19

1. Meanwhile, the Lord was speaking to *a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias*. The Lord told Ananias to *inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus*. What had Ananias *heard* about Saul?

2. What did the Lord tell Ananias about Saul? verses 15,16

- a. *Chosen vessels* sometimes *suffer*. What are some of your thoughts as you contemplate this truth?
3. According to verse 17, for what two things had the Lord sent Ananias to Saul?
4. *After receiving his sight, and being filled with the Holy Spirit*, Saul was *baptized*. Then he *received food and was strengthened*. What did he do next?
- a. Have you ever thought that someone was so bad that they didn't deserve to be saved? If you were one of these disciples, what might have been some of your thoughts as you were introduced to the well-known *Saul of Tarsus*?

PAUL, THE NEW DISCIPLE: Read Acts 9:20-30

1. After spending some days with the *disciples* in Damascus, what did Saul do?
 - a. What was unique about Saul's testimony?
 - 1.) What is unique about your testimony?
 - b. How did the people respond to Saul's preaching? verses 21,22
2. Using Acts 9:23-25, describe the *plot to kill Saul* and what the *disciples* did to help him escape.
3. Saul left Damascus for Jerusalem. What was his reception by the *disciples* in Jerusalem like? verse 26
 - a. We were introduced to Barnabas in Acts 4 as one of the believers who sold their land to give to the church. What do we find him doing in Acts 9:27,28?

- 1.) What impresses you about Barnabas?
- 2.) How could a person like Barnabas help heal wounds in a church group?
4. Again, Saul *spoke boldly* and again, there were those who *attempted to kill him*. What did the *brethren* do when they *found out*? verse 30
 - a. What lessons can we learn from the examples of *Barnabas* and these other *brethren*?

THE CHURCH PROSPERS: Read Acts 9:31

1. Acts 9 closed with the statement that *the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified*. What two things were they walking in?
 - a. In what way are others drawn to people who live like this?

REVIEW: Read Acts 9:1-31

1. What lessons did you learn from:
 - Saul
 - Ananias
 - the believers in Damascus and Jerusalem
 - Barnabas
2. How has your life changed since Jesus revealed Himself to you?

*Teach me Your way, O Lord; I will walk in Your truth;
Unite my heart to fear Your name.
- Psalm 86:11*

Observation Worksheet

Acts 9:1-31

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. 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?" Then 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?" Then 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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.