

August 30th & 31st, 2025

The Damascus Road

When God Interrupts a Life for His Glory

Acts 9:1-9

Saul's conversion reveals that no one is beyond the reach of God's grace; Christ sovereignly calls us to Himself, confronts our pride, and transforms our lives for His eternal purposes.

The Condition of the Church

- ❖ As Christianity was advancing and Samaria was experiencing revival through Philip's ministry, Saul found ways to persecute the church.

- ✦ The religious leaders were formally instituting persecution against Christianity.

Acts 9:1-2 "But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest ²and 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."

- ✦ Christianity had made its way to Damascus in Syria.

- ✦ Christianity was growing and becoming known as "The Way."

The Character of a Proud Man

- ❖ Before he encountered Jesus on the road to Damascus, Saul had no relationship with God.

- ✦ Saul was an angry young man.

Acts 9:1 "But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord..."

Acts 7:58b-59a "...And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. ⁵⁹And as they were stoning Stephen,..."

Acts 8:1,3 "And Saul approved of [Stephen's] execution. And arose that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria...Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison."

- ✦ Saul was an ambitious and religious man.

Acts 22:3-5 "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as all of you are this day."

Philippians 3:4-7 "Though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. ⁷But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ."

Acts 26:12-13 "In this connection I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. ¹³ At midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, that shone around me and those who journeyed with me."

☞ Saul was a cruel man.

Acts 22:4-5 "I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women, ⁵as the high priest and the whole council of elders can bear me witness. From them I received letters to the brothers, and I journeyed toward Damascus to take those also who were there and bring them in bonds to Jerusalem to be punished."

Acts 26:9-11 "I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things in opposing the name of Jesus of Nazareth. ¹⁰And I did so in Jerusalem. I not only locked up many of the saints in prison after receiving authority from the chief priests, but when they were put to death I cast my vote against them. ¹¹And I punished them often in all the synagogues and tried to make them blaspheme, and in raging fury against them I persecuted them even to foreign cities."

☞ Saul persecuted the church and therefore Christ.

Acts 9:4b "... 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me.'"

The Compassion of Jesus

❖ In the fiercest stage of Saul's persecution against the church, he experienced an encounter with the living God: Jesus.

☞ A surprising manifestation.

Acts 9:3 "Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him."

Acts 26:13 "At midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, that shone around me and those who journeyed with me."

☞ A sovereign call.

Acts 9:3-5 "Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. ⁴And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' ⁵And he said, 'Who are you, Lord?' And he said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.'"

☞ Jesus himself spoke to Saul.

Acts 9:4-6 "...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.'"

☞ A confrontation of Saul's actions.

☞ Deep conviction of sin.

Acts 9:5-6 "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.'" [NKJV]

☞ Divine grace for life.

Acts 9:6 "But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do."

The Changed Man

❖ Saul encountered a merciful God who gave him an amazing opportunity to experience God and to proclaim him.

↪ Saul immediately became a broken man.

Acts 9:8a "Saul rose from the ground, and although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing."

↪ After having an encounter with Jesus, Saul was a man in search of direction.

Acts 9:9 "And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank."

↪ The power of God transforms anyone who surrenders to Him.

Endnotes:

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