

## **Acts 9: THE CONVERSION OF SAUL**

### **Introduction**

In Chapters 7 and 8, Luke, the writer of Acts, intentionally inserted a previously unknown name called Saul. We see in Acts 7:58b, “Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul.” And in Acts 8:1a, “And Saul approved of their killing him.” This was done to prepare us for what is coming in chapter 9 and much later in the book. Luke was introducing us to Saul, who was later referred to as Paul (Acts 13:9) and would later become the main character in the book of Acts. In fact, almost the entire second half of Acts is devoted to Paul’s ministry and how he eventually fulfilled the later portion “....and to the ends of the earth” of Jesus’ commandment in Acts 1:8, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Many theologians believe Paul was God’s second (or backup) plan since the early apostles did not fully embrace God’s plan of taking the Gospel to the world. It is possible that Paul himself was referencing this when he referred to himself as “...one born out of due time.” (Read 1 Corinthians 15:3-8).

In Acts 9, we learn of the dramatic story of Paul’s conversion and the beginning of his ministry, and his own persecution. Notice how in verse 31, Luke concludes the story of Paul in this chapter, “Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers.” Luke’s interest in the conversion of Paul is because of its connection to his main goal, to show us the fulfillment of Acts 1:8.

The last ten to twelve verses of Acts 9 were a segue back to the ministry of Apostle Peter as Luke prepares us for another very interesting story coming in Acts chapter 10.

### **Study the Scriptures: Read the Passage Acts 9:1-43**

Note your thoughts as you read:

Write down any questions that come to mind as you read:

### Think Through the Following Questions

1. It can be tempting to gloss over a familiar story like the conversion of Saul if you've heard it before. What new insights did you glean from reading this story today?
2. What more can we learn about Saul from this passage? Look at his actions before the encounter, responses to Jesus during the encounter, and the actions that follow.
3. Take a look at Jesus' words to Paul during his conversion encounter; can we learn or infer anything about God's purpose of saving and encountering Saul?
4. During Saul's three days of blindness, he also fasted (v. 9). What do you think happened during those three days in Saul's heart, mind, and soul?
5. Why do you think Ananias was involved in Paul's conversion? Why did the Lord send Ananias to Saul instead of speaking to him directly as he did in verses 4-6?
6. How does the story of Saul's conversion either encourage or challenge us about the salvation of people in the world that we tend to feel are beyond saving?
7. What do we learn from Aeneas and Tabitha's healing, especially from Tabitha's miraculous raising from the dead?

**Lessons Learned: Are there any new things you learned from this passage today?**

**Application: How do you think this will impact your thinking and/or actions going forward?**