

Acts 9:1-19

August 31, 2025



CONVERSATION STARTERS

What are some highs or lows you experienced this past week?

What Scripture has been shaping you recently?

Where have you seen God moving in your life this week?

What did you hear in today's sermon OR read in today's passage that you would like to discuss?

What did you learn about yourself in today's sermon/passage?

What did you learn about God in today's sermon/passage?

What convicted you as you listened to today's sermon OR read in today's passage?

MAIN POINT

In our passage today, we will read about Saul the persecutor's life-changing encounter on the road to Damascus.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What have you been learning in our study of Acts so far? Any big takeaways?

What have we learned about Paul in our study of Acts so far?

Think back on stories of God working through people throughout the Bible. What do we know about the type of people God can use to achieve His goals?

For the last couple of weeks, we've been following the story of Philip's evangelical ministry. Today, we'll read the story of the most influential evangelist in the New



Testament—Saul who became Paul. While ravaging the church (Acts 8:3), Saul had an extraordinary encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

 ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ ACTS 9:1-6.

What impressions do we get about Saul from these verses?

What was Saul's goal at the beginning of this passage? From Paul's writings in other places, what do you think his motivation was?

Saul was actively working against the believers of the early church. We previously read that Saul was ravaging the church (Acts 8:3), and in our passage today, Luke recorded that "Saul was still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord" (v.1).

Saul had his sights set on the church and they were in very real danger of being arrested and brought to prison in Jerusalem. "The Way" (v.2) was a name for followers of Jesus. Not only was he on a mission, Saul had the backing of the high priest.

In the eyes of men, Saul might seem like the very last person God would have a use for in His plan for His people, but God had other plans. As Saul was nearing Damascus on his mission to stop the spread of Christianity, he had an encounter with the living Jesus that would change the course of his life (and the course of the church, as per God's plan). He was blinded by a "light from heaven" (v.3), and, falling to the ground, heard Jesus's voice.

It was here, lying on the ground on the road to Damascus, that Saul was first confronted with the truth that Jesus was not, as he had previously thought, a blasphemer who must be stopped, but the Son of God.

Stories like this still exist today. God in His divine goodness can (and does) make Himself known to His people in undeniable ways, all for His glory. As with Saul, those powerful moments area call to faith and the purpose God has planned for us.

 ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ ACTS 9:7-9.

Why is it significant that those with Saul also heard the voice? What purpose might this serve later on?

If you were Saul, how do you think you would be feeling in the three days of blindness?



How might this period have prepared him for what God had ahead?

After Jesus spoke, Saul set about doing what Jesus instructed. He got up and went into the city where he would be told what he must do (v.6). When Saul got up from the ground, he couldn't see anything, so his companions led him into Damascus, where "He was unable to see for three days and did not eat or drink." (v.9)

This event marked a dramatic shift in Saul's worldview. He had previously been so convinced that Jesus had been a blasphemer that he personally set out to do what he could to stop the spread of "The Way," and now, he was faced with the uncomfortable truth that he was wrong. This is a hard pill for anyone to swallow. Perhaps God gave Saul three days to think and wrap his head around what happened on the road to Damascus and what Jesus had planned for him next.

 ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ ACTS 9:10-19.

What are your takeaways from this passage?

How would you feel if you were Ananias in this moment?

How did Ananias display faith in God beyond what was in front of him?

After three days of blindness, God had a plan to bring Saul out of the darkness, and into the light (and kingdom work) via Ananias. Ananias has a very relatable reaction when God told him he is to go and visit Saul (remember, Saul had been ravaging the church). When he hesitated, God said Saul was his "chosen instrument" (v.15) to take the gospel to the "Gentiles, kings, and Israelites" (v.15). Saul had previously caused the suffering of many believers, but he would be the one suffering for the sake of the gospel soon (v.16).

Our passage today ends with an obedient Ananias visiting Saul, and Saul regaining his sight and strength, and being baptized in preparation for the ministry that lay ahead of him.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What does our passage today teach us about God? How do these events remind you of God's ability to work in any situation?

Have you ever experienced God working in your life in a powerful, undeniable way? What happened?



How does Saul's story give you hope you can share with others?

Saul's life shows us that God can use anyone in His plan (no matter what sin or shame lay in your past, He can use you, just like He used Saul). We'll explore this idea more next week as we continue to study the book of Acts, but for now, consider this story from a different lens.

Is there someone in your life who seems like they would never believe in Jesus? Maybe you have prayed for them for years and it doesn't seem their heart is changing, or maybe you've tried to talk to them about Jesus before and they didn't seem interested. Read Saul's story and take heart. If God can turn the heart of a persecutor to Him, the Holy Spirit can work in the heart of those people in your life, too, in accordance with His will. Take Saul's advice from 1 Thessalonians and "pray without ceasing" (5:17).

PRAYER

Close your time together by sharing prayer requests, praying for each other, and the group.

Thank God for showing up in your life, even when you least expect it. Pray for the people in your life who seem like they will never turn towards Jesus and ask that God would work in their hearts.

LOOKING AHEAD

Encourage your group to look ahead as we continue the series on Acts next week.

September 7, 2025 --- Acts 9:20-31

COMMENTARY

Acts 9:1-19

Paul's conversion is related three times in Acts, here and in two speeches of Paul; before a Jewish crowd in the temple yard (22:3–21), and in his address to King Agrippa (26:2–23). There are minor differences between the three accounts, mainly due to the different audiences to whom they were addressed. The present account is the primary account. It falls into three divisions.

Verses 9:1–9 relate the vision of Christ which came to Paul the persecutor on the Damascus Road. It was an objective experience. Paul's companions saw a light and heard a noise but only Paul experienced the vision itself. In persecuting the church Paul



was persecuting Christ Himself ("Why do you persecute me"). Paul now understood that Christ truly lived, that He was indeed the risen Messiah. In his letters Paul referred to his experience as an actual appearance of the risen Lord (e.g. 1 Cor. 15:8).

Verses 10–19a relate the interlocking visions of the blinded Paul and the Christian Ananias in Damascus. Ananias was understandably reluctant to approach this notorious persecutor, who had come to Damascus expressly to arrest Christians like himself. Ananias was instructed to come to Paul, restore his sight, baptize him, and reveal his commission to him. The commission is given in verses 15–16. Paul would now be a witness for Christ; the former persecutor of Christ would himself be persecuted for his own witness to Christ

