

* ACTS

The Continuing Work of Jesus

* Acts 9:1-19

Paul: From Enemy to Ambassador

Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, ²and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. ³And it came about that as he journeyed, he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; ⁴and he fell to the ground and 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, ⁶but get up and enter the city, and it will be told you what you must do." ⁷The men who traveled with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. ⁸Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; and leading him by the hand, they brought him into Damascus. ⁹And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

¹⁰Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and the Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord." ¹¹And the Lord *said* to him, "Get up and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying, ¹²and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him, so that he might regain his sight." ¹³But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he did to Your saints at Jerusalem; ¹⁴and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name." ¹⁵But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; ¹⁶for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake."

¹⁷So Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." ¹⁸And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he got up and was baptized; ¹⁹and he took food and was strengthened.

(Acts 9:1-19)

From Enemy to Ambassador

1. The 'Conquest' of an Enemy

- Paul's blindness was a sign of God's covenant curse and a metaphor of Paul's true spiritual condition (cf. Duet. 28:29)
- Jesus' removal of Paul's blindness in relation to his forgiveness/baptism is a graphic metaphor of salvation

⁴ ...the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God...

⁶ ...For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

(2 Corinthians 4:4,6)

From Enemy to Ambassador

2. The Commissioning of a Messenger

- a unique call to Apostolic ministry
- a call to go to the Gentiles/nations
- a call to suffer for Jesus
- a call to exemplify the message he preached

¹⁶ ...for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you; ¹⁷ rescuing you from the *Jewish* people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you,

¹⁸ to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'

(Acts 26:16-18)

From Enemy to Ambassador

3. The Work of Sovereign Grace

- Paul's conversion was sudden, unexpected and initiated completely by Jesus
- Paul was chosen and 'irresistibly' called by Jesus to be His instrument