

# Conversion on the Road to Damascus: What it Means to us - Acts 9:1-21

Anthony Garside – South Bay Christian Church – August 29, 2020 (Video Conference)

## SERMON NOTES HANDOUT-

Good Morning everyone, today we're going to take a look at a famous journey

--The Road to Damascus where Saul the Persecutor was converted and later named Paul the Persecuted

And we're going to take a look how God also:

- calls **us** out of darkness,
- appoints **us** for a mission and
- adopts **us** into family.

## PRAY

I'm going to read from Acts 9 and include the extra detail in Acts 22:4-16 and Acts 26:12-18.

**9** Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest <sup>2</sup> and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup> As he neared Damascus on his journey, (Acts 22 and 26 add at noon) suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him (Acts 26 adds brighter than the sun). <sup>4</sup> He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him (Acts 26 adds in Hebrew) , "**Saul**, Saul, why do you persecute me?" (Acts 22 adds: why do you kick against the goads?)

<sup>5</sup> "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked.

"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. <sup>6</sup> "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." (Acts 26 adds: <sup>16</sup> 'Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen and will see of me. <sup>17</sup> I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them <sup>18</sup> to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.')

<sup>7</sup> The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound (Acts 22 implies that they did not understand the voice) but did not see anyone. <sup>8</sup> Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. <sup>9</sup> For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.

<sup>10</sup> In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!" "Yes, Lord," he answered.

<sup>11</sup> The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. <sup>12</sup> In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight."

<sup>13</sup> "Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup> And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name."

<sup>15</sup> But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. <sup>16</sup> I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."

<sup>17</sup> Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” <sup>18</sup> Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he could see again. (Acts 26 adds: <sup>14</sup> “Then he said: ‘The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. <sup>15</sup> You will be his witness to all people of what you have seen and heard. He got up) <sup>19</sup> and after taking some food, he regained his strength. (Acts 22 adds Arise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.)

Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. <sup>20</sup> At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. <sup>21</sup> All those who heard him were astonished and asked, “Isn’t he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name? And hasn’t he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?”

## **God the Father draws us as He;**

- **Calls us out of darkness**

*Colossians 1 13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

Paul experienced firsthand the sheer helplessness and unworthiness of the human sinner and the invincible might of God’s mercy in Christ.

- **Appoints us for a mission**

Every Christian is called to serve Christ—with family, school, work, church, everywhere! Our mission is collective (Matthew 28:) and also specific (1 Peter 2:5) –He will tell you what to do--as you go through life just as Jesus told Paul.

- **Adopts us into family**

We have countless brothers and sisters all over the world. We live in a special community. Our citizenship is in heaven (*Ephesians 2 19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. 21 In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. 22 And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.*) We are a spiritual family created by God the Father in His Son Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Almost 2000 years later the Church in Damascus still exists.** Saul turned Paul did not wipe it out. Instead in Christ it grew and continues! Pray for our brothers and sisters in Syria and other war-torn oppressive countries. Pray for their encouragement and boldness to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ who saved Saul called Paul!