

Acts 9:1-22

- **SALVATION OF SAUL...**

- o Meeting Christ...

- When SAUL ran out of DISCIPLES in Jerusalem to persecute and imprison...
- He went to the High Priest and asked for permission to hunt them in Damascus...
- But as he came near to the city - he was surrounded by a BRIGHT light [noon day sun]
- Jesus asked him: Saul why are you persecuting Me - **Matthew 25:42**
- It was hard for Saul to kick against the GOAD [death] - **I Corinthians 15:57**
- God BLINDED Saul - to show him he was SPIRITUALLY blind - **John 9:39**

- o Chosen vessel...

- God came to a disciples called ANANIAS [God is Gracious]
- And gave him exact details - to go and pray for Saul to receive his sight...
- ANANIAS had doubts - because Saul had a reputation for persecuting Christians...
- But God said - He had chosen Saul to be an Apostle [twelfth] to the Gentiles...
- And when ANANIAS prayed for him - he did receive his sight - and was BAPTIZED [before eating]
- Immediately SAUL began to preach that Jesus is the Christ [Messiah]!

- **1ST - IMPOSSIBLE TO STOP... vs. 23-25**

- o 1st - Plot to kill... vs. 23

- Pleasing men...
 - Saul had served beside the Jews under a RELIGIOUS system they both cherished...
 - He advanced beyond all his peers - working harder than them all - **Philippians 3:5-6**
 - So that by following the rules - he had become FAMOUS among the Jews...
 - But FAMOUS among men - but it did NOTHING to make him right with God!
 - RELIGION is NOT about pleasing God - it is all about LOOKING good...
 - Wearing the right clothes - saying the right words - following the right traditions...
 - It is all to IMPRESS those around us - but it CANNOT save us from our sin!
- Pleasing God...
 - Now after many days were past the Jews plotted to kill him!
 - The very same men who had PRAISED Saul when he was a Jew...
 - Now sought to KILL him because he was preaching Jesus Christ...
 - Saul rejected RELIGION - realizing it kept him from SERVING Christ!
 - **Galatians 1:10** - "If I still pleased men I would not be a bondservant of Christ."
 - People prefer RELIGION to a relationship with Jesus...
 - Because RELIGION can be used to justify their sin...
 - They can do what they want the rest of the week - so long as they go to church on Sunday!

- o 2nd - Protected by God... vs. 24-25

- No worries... vs. 24
 - But their plot became known to Saul!
 - [Θέ] BUT - their PLAN was made [passive] KNOWN [γινώσκω] to Saul...
 - Saul had no reason to be worried or concerned - the Lord was watching out for him!
 - ANXIETY and WORRY come from thinking about things we have NO control over [future]
 - We spend countless hours - trying to work out what we should do [but have no answers]
 - The irony about worrying about our problems - is it does NOT help...
 - Because we focus on the PROBLEM - rather than the SOLUTION...
 - The answer is Jesus - He sees EVERYTHING - and lets us KNOW [passive] what to do!
 - **Philippians 4:6** - "Do not worry about anything - instead pray about everything." [NLT]

- Helping hand... vs. 24-25
 - And they watched the gates day and night to kill him.
 - Then the disciples took him by night and let him down through the wall in a large basket!
 - The Jews were constantly watching [imperfect] the gates of the city...
 - They even asked the governor to guard it with soldiers – **II Corinthians 11:32**
 - Day and night they were there - hoping [subjunctive] to KILL Saul...
 - Therefore - the ONLY way out of the city was over the wall [in a BASKET]
 - But Saul could NOT do this himself – he needed others to HELP...
 - The DISCIPLES [μαθητής] came to his aid - and made sure he got out safely...
 - What a twist – the people Saul used to trust as friends – were trying to KILL him...
 - The people Saul used to try and KILL – were the ones who SAVED his life!
 - When we chose to LIVE for Jesus - those in the world will NOT like it...
 - We may lose friends - people who used to LOVE us - now HATE us...
 - Because we are NO longer living by their RULES - we are following Christ...
 - And since they do NOT want Jesus - they will reject us!
 - **John 15:19** - “If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world - but I chose you out of the world - therefore the world hates you!”
- **2ND - IMPOSSIBLE TO SILENCE... vs. 26-31**
 - o 1st - Bad reputation... vs. 26
 - Not convinced...
 - When Saul had come to Jerusalem he tried to join the disciples.
 - But they were all afraid of him - and did not believe that he was a disciple!
 - When Saul returned to Jerusalem - he TRIED [imperfect] to join in the DISCIPLES [μαθητής]
 - [ΔΕ] BUT - they were ALL [πάντες] - including the Apostles - afraid [imperfect] of him...
 - Because they did NOT believe [πίστις] he was a DISCIPLE [μαθητής]!
 - No words...
 - It had been THREE years since Saul had chosen to follow Jesus - **Galatians 1:18**
 - Rumors had spread the great persecutor of the church got SAVED...
 - But most did NOT believe the man who hunted them to death – was a Christian...
 - Rather they FEARED it was a ploy to draw them out – and ARREST them...
 - And NOTHING Saul said could convince them – they needed to SEE the CHANGE!
 - I knew a man whose wife was a believer – and prayed for his salvation EVERY day...
 - Driving home DRUNK one night – he almost crashed his car...
 - In that moment he called out to Jesus to SAVE him – and became a Christian...
 - He immediately ran home to tell his wife the GREAT news – but God stopped him...
 - The Lord spoke to his heart – do not TELL your wife - SHOW her!
 - After we believe in Jesus – people will naturally be skeptical...
 - They will say we are NOT different – we are still the same old sinner...
 - And there is NOTHING we can SAY to change their mind...
 - We do NOT need to TELL people we believe in Jesus – we need to SHOW them...
 - No matter who we were – they will NOT be able to argue with a transformed life!
 - o 2nd - New definition... vs. 27
 - Barnabas...
 - But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles!
 - [ΔΕ] But - Although everyone else FEARED Saul – Barnabas believed he had CHANGED...
 - This is the same Son of encouragement [Barnabas] we read saw - **Acts 4:26**
 - He took Saul to the Apostles – only Peter and James were there – **Galatians 1:18**
 - All Jesus...

- He declared to them how he had seen the Lord on the road and that He had spoken to him.
 - And how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus!
 - Barnabas told the APOSTLES - how Jesus had MET and SPOKE to Saul - **Acts 9:4**
 - And how Saul had boldly spoken in the name of Jesus in Damascus...
 - Notice he NEVER made any references to his past [persecuting the church]
 - He only pointed out what Jesus had done in his life...
 - Because Barnabas did NOT see who SAUL was – he saw what JESUS could do!
 - We are NOT to judge each other by our MISTAKES...
 - We are not DEFINED by our PAST - we are NEW creations in Jesus – **II Corinthians 5:17**
 - We are now DEFINED by our Father in heaven - the righteousness of Christ!
- o 3rd - Bolding preaching... vs. 28-30
- Another plot... vs. 28-29
 - So he was with them at Jerusalem coming in and going out.
 - And he spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus.
 - And disputed against the Hellenists but they attempted to kill him!
 - So [καί] - Saul became part of the church in Jerusalem [going in and out]
 - He CONTINUED [imperfect] to speak BOLDLY in the name of the Lord [κύριος] Jesus...
 - AND [καί] - he began [imperfect] to DISPUTE [συζητέω] with the Hellenists!
 - The same Greek speaking Jews who had DISPUTED [συζητέω] with Steven – **Acts 6:9**
 - Like Steven - Saul wanted them to believe in Jesus – but had SIMILAR results...
 - The men plotted to KILL Saul – the same way they had KILLED Steven...
 - These men did had NOT learned – you CANNOT kill the Gospel message...
 - If you knock down one messenger – God will just send another!
 - Voltaire was one of the most vocal critics of the Bible during the Enlightenment [late 1700]
 - The Bible is what fools have written - what imbeciles commend - *Philosophical Dictionary*
 - His house would one day be purchased by Geneva Bible Society!
 - The Gospel is NOT some idea of men – it is powered by God – and unstoppable!
 - **I Peter 1:25** - “The word of the LORD endures forever.”
 - Called to Gentiles... vs. 30
 - When the brethren found out they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him out to Tarsus!
 - It was NOT the believers who discovered the PLOT against Saul...
 - They got him out of the city - and took him to Caesarea [port city]
 - From there they sent him back to his home in the city of Tarsus...
 - Where he will stay until Barnabas comes to get him to help in Antioch - **Acts 11:25**
 - But it is worth noting - the PLOT to kill Saul - was revealed by Jesus!
 - **Acts 22:18-21** – “I saw a vision of Jesus saying to me: Hurry! Leave Jerusalem for the people here will not accept your testimony about me... The Lord said to me: Go - for I will send you far away to the Gentiles!”
 - Saul wanted more than anything to be able to reach the JEWS - **Romans 9:3**
 - He assumed that because of his PAST - his PERSECUTION of the church...
 - That he had consented to the DEATH of Stephen - the Jews would believe him...
 - But God told him they would REJECT him - because they did NOT want Jesus...
 - Therefore - God would instead use Saul to share the good news with the GENTILES!
 - Just because we REALLY want someone to be saved – does NOT mean they will listen...
 - God wants more than anything for EVERYONE to be saved – but it is their choice - **II Peter 3:9**
 - All we can do is open the door – it is up to the person to choose to step through!
- o 4th - Growing church... vs. 31
- Built up...

- Then the churches throughout all Judea - Galilee - and Samaria had peace and were edified!
- As a RESULTS of the SALVATION of Saul - and his acceptance into the CHURCH...
- ALL of the churches: Judea - Galilee - and Samaria [that is as far as they had spread]
- Had [imperfect] PEACE [εἰρήνη] - the man who led the persecution was now saved...
- EDIFIED [οικοδομέω] - meaning to build [δῶμα] a home [οἶκος]
- They were BUILT up – because God had done the IMPOSSIBLE...
- God had taken their greatest ENEMY – and make him a BROTHER!
- When we realize that God can make a murderer – into a righteous saint...
- When we see that NOTHING is too difficult to God – no one too hard to save...
- Then we will have PEACE in life – because we understand Jesus has it all under control!
- Multiplying...
 - Walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit - they were multiplied!
 - And because the church was WALKING [present]
 - In the FEAR of the Lord - whom they saw could do ANYTHING...
 - And the COMFORT [παράκλησις] of the HOLY Spirit - who could change ANYONE...
 - The Lord [passive] was continually [imperfect] MULTIPLYING the church!
 - When the church BELIEVES - that NOTHING is impossible for God...
 - When we understand - that He can save ANYONE...
 - We are going to step out in FAITH - and reach out to EVERYONE...
 - And the results is going to be the Lord [passive] MULTIPLIES His Church!
- 3RD - NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE... vs. 32-43
 - o 1st - Encouraging churches... vs. 32-35
 - Seeing the need... vs. 32-34
 - Now it came to pass as Peter went through all parts of the country.
 - That he also came down to the saints who dwelt in Lydda.
 - There he found a certain man named Aeneas.
 - Who had been bedridden eight years and was paralyzed. And Peter said to him:
 - Aeneas Jesus the Christ heals you. Arise and make your bed. He arose immediately!
 - After the departure of Saul - the story shifts back to Peter - **Acts 10-12**
 - Who went down to visit ALL [πᾶς] the churches...
 - AND [καί] - when he came to the city of Lydda [near Tel Aviv]
 - There he met AENEAS [praise worthy] - he had been PARALYZED [passive] for EIGHT years...
 - Peter said to him - Jesus is healing [present] you [indicative] - STAND up [imperative]
 - IMMEDIATELY - the man stood up - and was HEALED!
 - We are NOT told HOW Peter knew Jesus was healing this man...
 - What we do know is that Peter was out walking – so he saw the NEED!
 - We do NOT know WHO or WHEN God might want to do a work...
 - But we do know that as we are LOOKING - going out to encourage others...
 - We will be ready and available whenever and whenever God comes calling!
 - Turning to God... vs. 35
 - So all who dwelt at Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord!
 - EVERYONE [πᾶς] who lived in Lydda and the surrounding region of Sharon [שָׁרׇן]
 - TURNED to the Lord [κύριος] when the SAW [εἶδον] the miracle!
 - It ONLY takes a SPARK - to set a forest on FIRE...
 - In the same way - ONE miracle - can start a REVIVAL!
 - People go about their lives with MUNDANE routine [wake up - work - sleep]
 - What they need is for someone to help them SEE - that there is MORE to this life...
 - As we step out in FAITH - see the NEED - and believe God does MIRACLES...

- We can be used to OPEN their eyes - bring REVIVAL to a dying world!
- o 2nd - A good woman... vs. 36-37
 - Disciple... vs. 36
 - At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha - which is translated Dorcas.
 - This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did!
 - In the city of JOPPA [יִפְּוֹ] - meaning beautiful [modern day Tel Aviv]
 - There was a DISCIPLE [μαθήτρια] - only women given this title in NT...
 - Here name was TABITHA [תַּבִּיִּתָּה] or DORCAS [Δορκάς] - both mean gazelle...
 - She was ALWAYS [imperfect] going GOOD [ἀγαθός] - and showing MERCY [ἔλεος]
 - HELPING out the poor - she even knitted clothes for all the women!
 - Death... vs. 37
 - But it happened in those days that she became sick and died.
 - When they had washed her they laid her in an upper room!
 - BUT [δὲ] - Tabitha got sick - and then DIED...
 - They washed her body [preparation for burial] - and put her in an UPPER room - **Acts 1:13**
 - I am sure many people asked – why did God let such a GOOD woman die!
 - If an ELDERLY person dies it was their time - if a BAD person dies they deserved it...
 - Yet if the person is YOUNG or KIND dies – we tend to think of it as a tragedy!
 - But for the believer that could not be farther from the truth...
 - Sometime God lets GOOD people die – because he wants to bring them HOME...
 - He knows that life in heaven – is far better than anything here on earth!
 - **Isaiah 57:1** – “The righteous pass away. The godly often die before their time... no one seems to understand that God is protecting them from the evil.”
- o 3rd - Bold prayer... vs. 38-40
 - Come quickly... vs. 38
 - Since Lydda was near Joppa - and the disciples had heard that Peter was there.
 - They sent two men to him imploring him not to delay in coming to them!
 - The DISCIPLES [μαθητῆς] heard that Peter was in the nearby city of Lydda...
 - So they sent two men to ask [παρακαλέω] for him to come QUICKLY...
 - Tabitha had LOVED the people – so the people were willing to do anything for her!
 - Often we look for others to take care of our needs - but there is no connection...
 - It is when we care for others – that then in turn care for us!
 - Everybody out... vs. 39-40
 - Peter arose and went with them. When he had come they brought him to the upper room.
 - And all the widows stood by him weeping.
 - Showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them.
 - But Peter put them all out!
 - When Peter came into the UPPER room - where Tabitha has been laid...
 - ALL [πάντες] of the widows showed him the CLOTHES she had made for them...
 - BUT [δὲ] - Peter kicked them ALL [πάντας] out - perhaps DOUBTING what would happen!
 - There was an evangelist named Smith Wigglesworth [early 1900s]
 - He was asked to pray for a DEAD man - he picked him up out of his coffin...
 - Commanded him to STAND - he slumped to the ground [two times]
 - The THIRD time the man slumped down half way - then stood up!
 - I am NOT sure I would have the confidence to pray for someone who has DIED...
 - Much less try a THIRD time - if the first TWO did not work...
 - But praise God - it does not take perfect faith for God to do a work – just a step of faith...
 - If we have the faith of a mustard seed - nothing is impossible - **Matthew 17:20**

- Seen this before... vs. 40
 - [He] knelt down and prayed - and turning to the body he said: Tabitha arise.
 - And she opened her eyes and when she saw Peter she sat up!
 - Peter knelt down and PRAYED - then turned to the BODY [she was dead]
 - He commanded her to RISE [imperative] - it was not a question – there was NO more doubt...
 - And she OPENED her eyes - saw Peter - and say up!
 - If I has been Peter - I would have come to COMFORT the church for their loss...
 - But Peter came and PRAYED for Tabitha to come back to LIFE - and she DID...
 - Why did Peter believe she could be resurrected - because he had seen it before...
 - When Jesus went into the house of Jairus and said - little girl get up - **Mark 5:41**
 - It is easy for us to DOUBT what we have NEVER seen...
 - We can look at the circumstances and conclude it is IMPOSSIBLE...
 - Jesus had given us VICTORY over DEATH - **I Corinthians 15:57**
 - But if we do NOT know His WORD - we will NOT have FAITH - and miss out on the miracles...
 - It has been said SEEING is believing - but that is NOT true...
 - It is when we BELIEVE God can do the IMPOSSIBLE - that we get to SEE!
- o 4th - Greater work... vs. 41-43
 - Many believed... vs. 41-42
 - Then he gave her his hand and lifted her up.
 - And when he had called the saints and widows he presented her alive.
 - It became known throughout all Joppa - and many believed on the Lord!
 - Peter called for the SAINTS [ἅγιοις] - and presented Tabitha ALIVE...
 - EVERYONE heard what happened - and MANY came to the Lord...
 - But what was even more amazing - was what happened NEXT!
 - The tanner... vs. 43
 - So it was that he stayed many days in Joppa with Simon a tanner!
 - It came to pass that Peter STAYED [μένω] in the house of a TANNER...
 - According to the Law – a tanner was an UNCLEAN profession – **Leviticus 11:35**
 - Therefore it was VERY unusual for Peter [a Jew] to choose to stay in his home...
 - The reason was God was preparing Peter for an even GREATER work...
 - God had used Peter to heal a lame man - and even to raise the dead...
 - Now God was going to use Peter to bring the Gospel to the unclean Gentiles!
 - **John 14:12** - “He who believes in Me the works I do he will do also - and greater works than these he will do.”
 - God wants to do a GREAT WORK through our lives...
 - What could be greater than healing the sick - raising the dead...
 - If you heal they will get sick again - if you raise the dead they die again one day...
 - The greater work – is giving the Gospel – bringing eternal life that never fades away!