**Lesson 10**

**Acts 9:1-31 The Conversion of Saul**

*In Chapter 8 we read how Saul had begun his persecution of the Jewish-Christians. We also learned that Philip the deacon, was filled with the Holy Spirit. He healed many and also drove out demons from people in Samaria. A sorcerer named Simon hears Philip preach the Word of Jesus Christ and becomes baptized. When he sees the healing power of the Holy Spirit, he wants to buy the power to confer the Spirit. He is sharply rebuked and cursed. Believing he may now be cursed he pleads and prays that no evil would fall upon him. Philip goes on to convert and baptize an Ethiopian eunuch but is miraculously “snatched away” by the Holy Spirit.*

1. **When this week did you feel closest to God? Was there a particular verse or lesson in Acts 9 that inspires you in some way?**
2. **Check your Bible for footnotes that explain “the Way”. Were Christians the only ones who used this term in the first century? See Acts 9:1-3 and bible footnotes.**

**Acts 9:1-19 1**Now Saul, still breathing murderous threats against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest **2**and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, that, if he should find any men or women who belonged to the Way, he might bring them back to Jerusalem in chains. **3**On his journey, as he was nearing Damascus, a light from the sky suddenly flashed around him.**4**He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” **5**He said, “Who are you, sir?” The reply came, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. **6**Now get up and go into the city and you will be told what you must do.” **7**The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, for they heard the voice but could see no one. **8**Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him to Damascus. **9**For three days he was unable to see, and he neither ate nor drank. **10**There was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias, and the Lord said to him in a vision, “Ananias.” He answered, “Here I am, Lord.” **11**The Lord said to him, “Get up and go to the street called Straight and ask at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul. He is there praying, **12**and [in a vision] he has seen a man named Ananias come in and lay [his] hands on him, that he may regain his sight.” **13**But Ananias replied, “Lord, I have heard from many sources about this man, what evil things he has done to your holy ones in Jerusalem. **14**And here he has authority from the chief priests to imprison all who call upon your name.” **15**But the Lord said to him, “Go, for this man is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before Gentiles, kings, and Israelites, **16**and I will show him what he will have to suffer for my name.” **17**So Ananias went and entered the house; laying his hands on him, he said, “Saul, my brother, the Lord has sent me, Jesus who appeared to you on the way by which you came, that you may regain your sight and be filled with the holy Spirit.” **18**Immediately things like scales fell from his eyes and he regained his sight. He got up and was baptized, **19**and when he had eaten, he recovered his strength.

1. **What physical symptoms affected Saul after seeing and hearing Jesus? See Acts 9:3-9.**
2. **How was the experience of Jesus different for Saul’s companions? Reflection: How is this significant in our understanding of Saul? See Acts 9:3-9.**
3. **What do you think was the nature of Saul’s prayers? How do you think you would be praying if you were in his situation? See Acts 9:11-12.**
4. **How is this account of Saul’s conversion different from the accounts told in Acts 22:6-16 and Acts 26:2-18? See Acts 9:1-19, Acts 22:3-16 and Acts 26:12-18. Why do you suppose the story varies in each case?**

**Acts 22:6-16 6**“On that journey as I drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from the sky suddenly shone around me. **7**I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?’ **8**I replied, ‘Who are you, sir?’ And he said to me, ‘I am Jesus the Nazorean whom you are persecuting.’ **9**My companions saw the light but did not hear the voice of the one who spoke to me.**10**I asked, ‘What shall I do, sir?’ The Lord answered me, ‘Get up and go into Damascus, and there you will be told about everything appointed for you to do.’**11**Since I could see nothing because of the brightness of that light, I was led by hand by my companions and entered Damascus.

**12**“A certain Ananias, a devout observer of the law, and highly spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, **13**came to me and stood there and said, ‘Saul, my brother, regain your sight.’ And at that very moment I regained my sight and saw him. **14**Then he said, ‘The God of our ancestors designated you to know his will, to see the Righteous One, and to hear the sound of his voice; **15**for you will be his witness[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+22&version=NABRE#fen-NABRE-32039b)] before all to what you have seen and heard. **16**Now, why delay? Get up and have yourself baptized and your sins washed away, calling upon his name.’

**Acts 26:12-18.12**“On one such occasion I was traveling to Damascus with the authorization and commission of the chief priests. **13**At midday, along the way, O king, I saw a light from the sky, brighter than the sun, shining around me and my traveling companions. **14**We all fell to the ground and I heard a voice saying to me in Hebrew, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goad.’[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+26&version=NABRE#fen-NABRE-32157c)] **15**And I said, ‘Who are you, sir?’ And the Lord replied, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. **16**Get up now, and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness of what you have seen [of me] and what you will be shown.[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+26&version=NABRE#fen-NABRE-32159d)] **17**I shall deliver you from this people and from the Gentiles to whom I send you, **18**to open their eyes[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+26&version=NABRE#fen-NABRE-32161e)] that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may obtain forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been consecrated by faith in me.’

1. **Why was Ananias afraid to follow the Lord’s commands? If you recall the call of Jonah from last year, how is the initial response of Ananias similar to Jonah’s response to God?**
2. **How does Ananias heal Saul?**
3. **Reflection: Was the healing of Saul physical or spiritual? Which sacraments in today’s Church can you see reflected in the actions of Ananias?**
4. **Saul had many enemies. How did he escape being killed by the Jews who wanted him dead? See Acts 9:23-25.**

**Acts 9:23-30 23**After a long time had passed, the Jews conspired to kill him, **24**but their plot became known to Saul. Now they were keeping watch on the gates day and night so as to kill him, **25**but his disciples took him one night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket. **26**When he arrived in Jerusalem he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. **27**Then Barnabas took charge of him and brought him to the apostles, and he reported to them how on the way he had seen the Lord and that he had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had spoken out boldly in the name of Jesus. **28**He moved about freely with them in Jerusalem, and spoke out boldly in the name of the Lord. **29**He also spoke and debated with the Hellenists,[[h](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+9&version=NABRE#fen-NABRE-31565h)] but they tried to kill him. **30**And when the brothers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him on his way to Tarsus.

1. **Reflection: Think for a moment about the difficult time Paul has had so far in becoming a witness for the saving power of Jesus Christ. What obstacles are making his call a difficult one to follow?**