

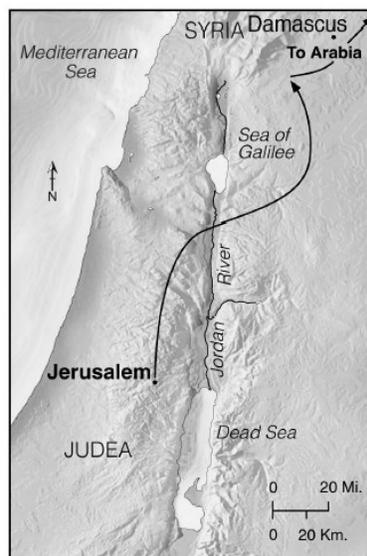
Week 14—Acts 9:1-31 (for Sunday, April 12)

Begin each day of your study by asking the LORD to speak to you through His Word.

Day 1

1. Read Acts 9:1-19. As you read this story, make note of what most stands out to you and why. How would you have felt if you were Saul?

Damascus—Located outside of the Holy Land in Samaria, Damascus was the closest important city to Jerusalem as well as a central hub to the rest of the known world at the time. It was about 150 miles away (see map) and would have required a six-day journey by Saul. It had a large Jewish population, so Saul wanted to make sure the message of Jesus had not spread here, because if it did it would spread throughout the rest of the world.



2. In v. 2 the church is called “the Way”. Why do you think that is? How would you explain being part of “the way” to someone today in a world that finds this kind of exclusivity intolerant?

The Way—This is the most common name for the church in the book of Acts, including by the believers themselves. It referred to “the way to be saved” (16:17) or “the way of the Lord...the way of God” (18:25-26); that is, the only way of life that God established by which people could be saved (cf. John 14:6).

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Day 2

1. *Read Acts 9:1-19.* What does Saul learn about who Jesus is in this section (see vv. 2-5, 20, 22)? What difference does Jesus’ identity make to you?

2. Did Saul see Jesus Himself or a vision of Jesus (see Acts 9:27; 22:14-15; 26:16)? Why was this important for him and the church even still today (see 1 Corinthians 9:1)?

3. How do Gamaliel’s words in Acts 5:38-39 relate to this story? Can you think of a time in your life when you were “fighting against God” and needed His intervention? What does that teach us about the LORD?

Day 3

1. Read Acts 9:1-19. What was ironic about the way Saul entered Damascus? How had he intended to enter the city (9:2)? Have you ever had an experience like this? If so, what did it teach you?

2. What *caused* Saul's conversion? How is Saul's conversion similar and different from your own? What *must* take place for true conversion to happen?

3. How is the conversion of Saul a picture of God's radical grace? How does it give you confidence and hope in the power and work of the gospel? Who is a "Saul" in your life you could be praying for?

4. How did you become a follower of Jesus? What was it like at first? What has changed since then? Why?

Day 4

1. Read Acts 9:10-31. What is Paul's mission going to be (vv. 15-16)? How is our mission like and unlike Saul's? How are you fulfilling this mission? How can you do better?

2. How do vv. 19-31 already show how Paul “must suffer” for Jesus’ name? How might modern Christians be called to suffer for Jesus’ name today? Where have you seen this either in your own life or elsewhere?

3. How would you have liked to be Ananias? What makes him an “unsung hero” of the church? What can we learn from his example?

Day 5

1. *Read Acts 9:19-31.* What immediate evidence of salvation do you see in Saul after his encounter with Jesus? What is the relationship between faith and works we see in his example? Why wasn’t he more successful?

2. Has your commitment to Christ changed your outlook and way of life as radically as Saul’s (cf. Philippians 3:2-11)? Why or why not? What would your life look like if you took Saul’s attitude and example?

3. In Saul’s conversion story both Ananias and Barnabas play an important role. What does this teach us about the way God works? How does their example apply to you today? Who might you be called to disciple in “the way” of Jesus?

