

Subject	Lessons from Acts Series	4409
		Acts 9
Title	7 Lessons from Acts 9	
Proposition	To study Acts 9.	
Objective	To consider seven lessons which Acts 9 helps me to consider and appreciate and apply in my own life.	

7 Lessons from Acts 9

Introduction:

1. **This reading provides information regarding the conversion of one of the greatest evangelists we read about in the NT.**
 - 1) **When we study about the conversion of Saul here, it is important to remember that Luke provides a record of Paul giving a description of his conversion on two occasions...**
 - 1- **First before the Council in Jerusalem (22.1-21).**
 - 2- **And, then before King Agrippa (26.1-20).**
 - 2) **His FIRST exposure to Christianity caused him zealously to oppose the movement.**
 - 1- **No doubt, Saul was convinced that it was God's will that he fight against the sect of the Nazarene (as he would have considered them at the time).**
 - 2- **Acts 23:1 *And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.***
 - 3) **However, on the road to Damascus the Lord appeared to him and Saul's life made a 180-degree turn.**
 - 1- **NOW, he would ZEALOUSLY defend Christianity.**
 - 2- **Actually, Paul felt INDEBTED to spread the saving message of forgiveness through Jesus Christ—Romans 1:14 *I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.***
 - 3- **The FALSE IDEA that Saul was converted ON THE ROAD to Damascus is easily seen to be false by a careful reading of the text!**
 - 4) **At first, after Saul's conversion, brethren still feared Saul.**
 - 5) **But another great evangelist by the name of Barnabas helped to convince the brethren that the POWER OF THE GOSPEL had changed this devoted Pharisee into a true and faithful follower of Christ.**
2. **In Chapter 9 we find these matters considered...**
 - 1) **Saul seeks and obtains authority to imprison Christians (9.1-2).**
 - 2) **The Exalted Christ appears to Saul on the road to Damascus (3-6a).**
 - 3) **Saul is instructed to GO INTO THE CITY and he would be TOLD WHAT HE MUST DO (6b-9).**
 - 4) **Ananias is sent to Saul (10-16).**
 - 5) **Ananias lays hands on Saul and his vision IMMEDIATELY returns—Saul is baptized (17-18).**

- 6) Saul preaches Christ (19-22).
 - 7) Saul received persecution and escapes Damascus in a basket (23-25).
 - 8) Christians in Jerusalem are reluctant to welcome Saul into their fellowship (26).
 - 9) Barnabas speaks up in favor of accepting Saul (27).
 - 10) Saul preaches in Jerusalem and Tarsus (28-30).
3. Let's notice together SEVEN lessons from Acts 9.

DISCUSSION: Acts 9 Helps me in that it—

I. DEMONSTRATES THAT: MISGUIDED BUT ZEALOUS ENEMIES OF CHRIST, WILL OPPOSE THE TRUTH WITH GREAT FORCE (9.1).

Acts 9:1 And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,

1. In fact, Saul would seem to be the PRIME EXAMPLE of this just such a person.
 - 1) He held nothing back.
 - 2) We know from Acts 23.1 that he was doing these things to oppose Jesus Christ and His followers because HE THOUGHT GOD WANTED HIM TO DO SO.
 - 3) Acts 23:1 **And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.**
 - 4) When he looked back on these times, Paul realized he had been: a **BLASPHEMER**, a **PERSECUTOR**, and **INJURIOUS** (1 Tm 1.13).
2. The question is: **WILL CHRISTIANS USE THE GREAT POWER AVAILABLE TO THEM (Rom 1.16) to resist and defeat forces that behave like Saul did?**
 - 1) **Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.**
 - 1- There is **NO OTHER** power to save man from sin available to any of us!
 - 2- Men continually try to create new and better ways but the truth remains as written by Paul in the 1st Century: **THE GOSPEL IS the only POWER OF GOD** unto salvation.
 - 3- So long as we do not abandon the gospel and so long as we continue faithfully living the Christian life, we will be successful!
 - 4- It really does **NOT MATTER** how many enemies of the truth come against us.
 - 5- Many or few can be defeated by the gospel message and saints who are willing to live it and teach it and model it before others!
3. If we need **MOTIVATION** to face trials, Revelation 2.7 should be quite helpful—Revelation 2:7 **He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.**
 - 1) These words are a part of the message Jesus sent to the church at Ephesus.
 - 2) The first part of the verse is a demand for each individual Christian at Ephesus to **LISTEN UP** and do what He is telling them.
 - 1- He is making **APPLICATION** to each Christian.

- 2- **HE WHO HAS AN EAR LET HIM HEAR** was a favorite expression for Jesus (Mt 11.15; 13.43; Mk 4.23; Lk 14.35).
- 3- In the **SAME WAY** that the church at Ephesus needed to heed the words of Jesus here, **YOU AND I** likewise need to do so.
4. **Think about our brethren in Palembang.**
- 1) This city is presently a **STRONGHOLD** for the religion of Islam.
 - 2) These Christians are there and they are doing the kinds of things they can do to improve the situation where they live.
 - 3) They know the truth.
 - 4) They know that most of their neighbors are headed for eternity unprepared.
 - 5) They have a great interest in knowing more of God's will so they can be more and more effective in helping their lost friends and neighbors.
 - 6) **BUT**, there is a great body of **FORCE** in that city opposed to the doctrine of Christ, and they have to use good judgment in all they do.

Acts 9 Helps me in that it—

II. PROVIDES A CONTRAST BETWEEN THE ACTIVITY OF PHILIP IN ACTS 8 WITH THAT OF SAUL IN ACTS 9 (9.1).

1. **A PHILIP** builds up the church; a **Saul** **MAKES HAVOC** of it—Which are YOU? *From Frank L. Cox—Treatises of Luke, p. 172.*
2. Let's be **SURE** properly to evaluate and to figure out how we **SHOULD** feel about the sincerity of people who do not abide in the doctrine of Christ.
 - 1) Often, we tend to **COMMEND** and **PRAISE** someone who is sincere in their belief of error.
 - 2) It is obviously true that the sincerity of someone who is **IN ERROR** can be just as absolute as your sincerity is in believing the truth!
3. **BUT, HAVE YOU EVER CONSIDERED**, this... That person who is in error—**NOT FOLLOWING THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST**—and who is **SINCERE** in that error is actually much more dangerous to the cause of Christ than the person who is not so sincere in his belief of error! *FLC.*
 - 1) Saul was **FEARED** by Ananias--Ananias was reluctant to go to Saul because he was afraid of him—**Acts 9:13-14** *Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: (14) And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.*
 - 2) Other brethren felt likewise—**Acts 9:26** *And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.*
4. Do we think of people who teach error as our enemies in the spiritual warfare God has called us to enter?
 - 1) We should love all men, even our enemies, **YES**.
 - 2) **BUT**, there is a very real sense in which people who are sincerely practicing error are our **ENEMIES**.

- 1- I just wonder how many of us actually have this settled in our own minds.
 - 2- Without the opposition of false teachers more people would be heading toward heaven.
 - 3- Without the opposition of false teachers fewer people would be heading toward hell.
 - 4- Doesn't this make your relationship just a little different with such people?
 - 5- Have you ever prayed a prayer in which YOU asked God to defeat the influence of someone you know who is sincerely following error?
5. I sort of have the idea in my own mind that the saints in the 1st Century who knew of Saul's evil work against the church were praying that his work would fail!
- 1) **Ephesians 6:13-17** Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. (14) Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; (15) And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; (16) Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. (17) And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:
 - 1- It really grieves my soul when I attend a funeral of someone whom I know was a promoter of error and had influence over others to believe the same.
 - 1] They lived their lives in Saul's position.
 - 2] They never repented of the HAVOC they caused.
 - 3] They allowed themselves to be fooled with false doctrine when they held in their hands the truth of God's Word.
 - 4] They failed to make proper use of that which God had provided them.
 - 2- That person was the ENEMY of the cause of Christ.
 - 3- Because of his/her sincere belief in error, others will be lost eternally.
 - 4- I need to oppose all error and I need to work against those who spread it.
 - 2) In the very next verse from the Ephesians 6 passage we read—Ephesians 6:18 **Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;**
 - 1- We have the powerful weapon of prayer.
 - 2- Do you think that we use it effectively in our battle against the forces of error?
 - 3- I am confident that all of us could find room for improvement in the matter of using prayer in spiritual battle!!!

Acts 9 Helps me in that it—

III. I LEARN AGAIN ABOUT THE NEED TO PREPARE A DEFENSE AGAINST ANOTHER ALLEGED CONTRADICTION (9.7 + 22.9).

Acts 9:7 And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, **hearing a voice, but seeing no man.** + **Acts 22:9** And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but **they heard not the voice** of him that spake to me.

1. People who do not have the same HIGH view of Scripture as we do diligently SEARCH for contradictions in the Bible text.
 - 1) We must KNOW that just because a contradiction is ALLEGED, does NOT mean a contradiction exists.
 - 2) Many are alleged, in fact, but they can be harmonized with a bit of study and research.
2. Here it is alleged that when Paul was remembering and telling about the time of his conversion (before the Sanhedrin) that he made a statement contradictory to the one recorded in Acts 9.
3. Actually, there is NO contradiction here at all when we spend a minute studying the words. *Wayne Jackson and others point out that.*
 - 1) There is NO DISCREPANCY.
 - 2) The Greek word for VOICE in these two passages is φωνη.
 - 3) When this term is used with the Genitive case (as in 9.7), it merely SPECIFIES that a sound was heard.
 - 4) When used with the Accusative case (as in 22.9), it suggests the EXTENT to which a message is heard.
 - 1- The idea being, in the 22.9 passage they heard something,
 - 2- BUT did not understand the actual words.
4. A similar thing can be observed from John 12:28-29 **Father, glorify thy name.** Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. (29) The people therefore, that stood by, and **heard it, said that it thundered:** others said, An angel spake to him. *They obviously did not DISTINGUISH the words God spoke to Jesus!*
5. Once again, I see, that Scripture does NOT contradict Scripture.

Acts 9 Helps me in that it—

IV. HELPS ME BETTER UNDERSTAND PAUL'S SPECIAL MISSION, GIVEN TO HIM BY JESUS (9.15).

Acts 9:15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: *From Bob Winton, 155.*

1. Ananias had some doubts about approaching Saul for he knew about this man's reason for being in Damascus.
 - 1) Reports about the evil Saul had brought against the saints at Jerusalem were already broadcast.
 - 2) It is interesting to notice here that those who are obedient to Christ are described as **THOSE THAT CALL ON THY NAME (v. 14).**

- 3) Those who call on the name of the Lord are those who OBEY Christ.
2. Jesus assured Ananias that Saul had been chosen for a special work.
 - 1) He would carry the Lord's name before: Gentiles, Kings, and Children of Israel.
 - 2) The prophecy of Isaiah 62.2 was fulfilled partly through the work of Paul.
 - 3) The name CHRISTIAN was given to the saints ONLY AFTER Paul had begun his great work and had been brought to Antioch (Acts 11.26).
 - 4) Paul was a CHOSEN VESSEL, selected by Jesus to carry out a certain work.
3. Paul and the other apostles were EARTHEN VESSELS bearing the treasure of the gospel (2 Cor 4.7).
4. His great job was to carry the name of Jesus (preach the gospel) before Gentiles, kinds, and the children of Israel.

Acts 9 Helps me in that it—

V. PROVES WE OUGHT NOT BE SURPRISED AT THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL TO CHANGE THE LIVES OF MEN & WOMEN, BOYS & GIRLS (9.20-21).

Acts 9:20-21 And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. (21) But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?

1. Notice the word AMAZED in verse 21.
 - 1) There was something about Paul's behavior that simply AMAZED the people who heard him in the synagogue.
 - 2) What was that?
 - 3) It was that he was preaching a message he was not at all likely to be preaching—they would NEVER suspect that he would have any desire whatsoever to preach that message.
 - 4) Instead of preaching Christ, he had been persecuting the followers of Christ and destroying them.
2. So there was a change that had come over Saul that was noticed by many people.
 - 1) It was the change from making HAVOC of the church to promoting the good interest of the church.
 - 2) What was the great power that caused this easily observable change?
 - 1- It was the gospel of Christ.
 - 2- It was the power of God unto salvation.
 - 3- When a person pays close attention to the powerful words of Scripture, ...
 - 1] Listens carefully to them.
 - 2] Allows time to consider them carefully.
 - 3] Uses his power to reason.
 - 4] Draws only such conclusions as are demanded by the evidence,
 - 5] Then you find a response/reaction to the gospel similar to the one that came over Saul.

3. If we read and study our Bibles carefully, we should **NOT** be surprised that the gospel has such power to change the lives of people!
4. Rather, the proper way of thinking is to appreciate that great power of God's book, and work diligently to help others be changed by it like Saul was.

Acts 9 Helps me in that it—

VI. SHOWS ME THE WORK OF A GREAT ENCOURAGER (9.27).

Acts 9:27 But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.

1. Evidently Barnabas saw tremendous possibilities for Saul to help in the spread of the gospel.
2. He was willing to use his own good name and influence to make it easier for Saul to begin the work Jesus had given him to do.
3. Barnabas did not have to do what he did, but his eyes were open to opportunities to serve the Lord.
4. Someone needed to say a good word for Saul and Barnabas was just the one to do it.
5. Can you imagine how greatly that word was appreciated by Saul?
6. Occasions may come along that provide similar opportunities for you and me.
7. Will our minds remember the great service rendered here by the GREAT ENCOURAGER, Barnabas?
8. This was only the beginning of a very fruitful relationship in the spreading of the gospel message.
 - 1) They worked together in Antioch of Syria.
 - 2) They were later sent out into the mission field together by the great Antioch church (Acts 13.2).
 - 3) I am confident there were many occasions in which these two great evangelists encouraged one another.

Acts 9 Helps me in that it—

VII. SHOWS ME THE WORK OF A GREAT CHRISTIAN LADY (9.36-41).

1. With the raising of Dorcas, the Apostle Peter brought great JOY to many because of the good works she had done, which had caused many to love her much.
2. Since Peter was in nearby Joppa, he was called to come to Lydda at the death of this very important and beloved Christian (v. 38).
 - 1) It is not stated precisely for what purpose Peter was called.
 - 2) Perhaps the brethren had in mind that Peter would say some comforting words.
 - 3) Maybe they had in mind that Peter might do the very thing that he did do in raising Dorcas from the dead.
3. **Acts 9:39** Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them.

- 1) **Whatever the purpose for which Peter came to Lydda, he brought the POWER of God and it was God's will that His power be exercised.**
- 2) **There was no need for the hiring of professional mourners at the death of this godly woman.**
- 3) **The tears flowed freely from the ones helped.**
4. **Multiplied thousands of Christian women have studied about and been motivated by the few words Luke records here about this godly woman.**
5. **How much poorer would we be today if Luke (guided by the Holy Spirit) had not included her story here!**
6. **The power of good works was easily in evidence in that place and that time!**
 - 1) **The same is true in most congregations of the Lord's people in our day.**
 - 2) **The power of loving interest in the well-being of others has GREAT EFFECT and is a work Christian women handle so gracefully!**
 - 3) **Dorcas helps all of us to be better people when we observe (with the mind's eye) the beautiful coats and garments she made!**

Conclusion:

1. **Acts 9 is filled with content to build a faithful life upon.**
2. **How blessed we are to have it!**