**Acts 7-9** - November 3rd

Today’s Summary: Paul is changed from Saul to Paul because Jesus appears and asks him why he is persecuting him? The greatest conversion from hater to lover of the Church that is a reminder to us all that Jesus can heal any man in the same way.

**Stephen’s Speech to the Sanhedrin**

**7**Then the high priest asked Stephen, “Are these charges true?”

2To this he replied: “Brothers and fathers, listen to me! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was still in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Harran. 3‘Leave your country and your people,’ God said, ‘and go to the land I will show you.’

**4**“So he left the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Harran. After the death of his father, God sent him to this land where you are now living. **5**He gave him no inheritance here, not even enough ground to set his foot on. But God promised him that he and his descendants after him would possess the land, even though at that time Abraham had no child. **6**God spoke to him in this way: ‘For four hundred years your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated. **7**But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves,’ God said, ‘and afterward they will come out of that country and worship me in this place.’ **8**Then he gave Abraham the covenant of circumcision. And Abraham became the father of Isaac and circumcised him eight days after his birth. Later Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob became the father of the twelve patriarchs.

**9**“Because the patriarchs were jealous of Joseph, they sold him as a slave into Egypt. But God was with him **10**and rescued him from all his troubles. He gave Joseph wisdom and enabled him to gain the goodwill of Pharaoh king of Egypt. So Pharaoh made him ruler over Egypt and all his palace.

**11**“Then a famine struck all Egypt and Canaan, bringing great suffering, and our ancestors could not find food. **12**When Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent our forefathers on their first visit. **13**On their second visit, Joseph told his brothers who he was, and Pharaoh learned about Joseph’s family. **14**After this, Joseph sent for his father Jacob and his whole family, seventy-five in all. **15**Then Jacob went down to Egypt, where he and our ancestors died. **16**Their bodies were brought back to Shechem and placed in the tomb that Abraham had bought from the sons of Hamor at Shechem for a certain sum of money.

**17**“As the time drew near for God to fulfill his promise to Abraham, the number of our people in Egypt had greatly increased. **18**Then ‘a new king, to whom Joseph meant nothing, came to power in Egypt.’ **19**He dealt treacherously with our people and oppressed our ancestors by forcing them to throw out their newborn babies so that they would die.

20“At that time Moses was born, and he was no ordinary child. For three months he was cared for by his family. 21When he was placed outside, Pharaoh’s daughter took him and brought him up as her own son. 22Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action.

**23**“When Moses was forty years old, he decided to visit his own people, the Israelites. **24**He saw one of them being mistreated by an Egyptian, so he went to his defense and avenged him by killing the Egyptian. **25**Moses thought that his own people would realize that God was using him to rescue them, but they did not. **26**The next day Moses came upon two Israelites who were fighting. He tried to reconcile them by saying, ‘Men, you are brothers; why do you want to hurt each other?’

**27**“But the man who was mistreating the other pushed Moses aside and said, ‘Who made you ruler and judge over us? **28**Are you thinking of killing me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?’ **29**When Moses heard this, he fled to Midian, where he settled as a foreigner and had two sons.

**30**“After forty years had passed, an angel appeared to Moses in the flames of a burning bush in the desert near Mount Sinai. **31**When he saw this, he was amazed at the sight. As he went over to get a closer look, he heard the Lord say: **32**‘I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.’ Moses trembled with fear and did not dare to look. **33**“Then the Lord said to him, ‘Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground. **34**I have indeed seen the oppression of my people in Egypt. I have heard their groaning and have come down to set them free. Now come, I will send you back to Egypt.’

**35**“This is the same Moses they had rejected with the words, ‘Who made you ruler and judge?’ He was sent to be their ruler and deliverer by God himself, through the angel who appeared to him in the bush. **36**He led them out of Egypt and performed wonders and signs in Egypt, at the Red Sea and for forty *(40)* years in the wilderness. **37**“This is the Moses who told the Israelites, ‘God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your own people.’[[h](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+7-9&version=NIV#fen-NIV-27154h)] **38**He was in the assembly in the wilderness, with the angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our ancestors; and he received living words to pass on to us.

39“But our ancestors refused to obey him. Instead, they rejected him and in their hearts turned back to Egypt. **40**They told Aaron, ‘Make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who led us out of Egypt - we don’t know what has happened to him!’ ***(Exodus 32:1)*** **41**That was the time they made an idol in the form of a calf. They brought sacrifices to it and reveled in what their own hands had made. **42**But God turned away from them and gave them over to the worship of the sun, moon and stars. This agrees with what is written in the book of the prophets:

“‘Did you bring me sacrifices and offerings forty years in the wilderness, people of Israel? **43**You have taken up the tabernacle of Molek and the star of your god Rephan, the idols you made to worship. Therefore I will send you into exile’ ***(Amos 5:25-27)*** beyond Babylon.

**44**“Our ancestors had the tabernacle of the covenant law with them in the wilderness. It had been made as God directed Moses, according to the pattern he had seen. **45**After receiving the tabernacle, our ancestors under Joshua brought it with them when they took the land from the nations God drove out before them. It remained in the land until the time of David, **46**who enjoyed God’s favor and asked that he might provide a dwelling place for the God of Jacob. **47**But it was Solomon who built a house for him.

48“However, the Most High does not live in houses made by human hands. As the prophet says: 49“‘Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me? says the Lord. Or where will my resting place be? 50Has not my hand made all these things?’*(Isaiah 66:1-2)*

51“You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit! 52Was there ever a prophet your ancestors did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him - 53you who have received the law that was given through angels but have not obeyed it.”

The Stoning of Stephen

**54**When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. **55**But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. **56**“Look,” he said, “I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”

**57**At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, **58**dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul.

59While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” 60Then he fell on his knees and cried out, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he fell asleep.

**8**And Saul approved of their killing him.

The Church Persecuted and Scattered

On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. **2**Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him. **3**But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison.

Philip in Samaria

**4**Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. **5**Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah there. **6**When the crowds heard Philip and saw the signs he performed, they all paid close attention to what he said. **7**For with shrieks, impure spirits came out of many, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. **8**So there was great joy in that city.

Simon the Sorcerer

**9**Now for some time a man named Simon had practiced sorcery in the city and amazed all the people of Samaria. He boasted that he was someone great, **10**and all the people, both high and low, gave him their attention and exclaimed, “This man is rightly called the Great Power of God.” **11**They followed him because he had amazed them for a long time with his sorcery. **12**But when they believed Philip as he proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. **13**Simon himself believed and was baptized. And he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw.

**14**When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to Samaria. **15**When they arrived, they prayed for the new believers there that they might receive the Holy Spirit, **16**because the Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. **17**Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

**18**When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles’ hands, he offered them money **19**and said, “Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.”

**20**Peter answered: “May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money! **21**You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right before God. **22**Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord in the hope that he may forgive you for having such a thought in your heart. **23**For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin.”

**24**Then Simon answered, “Pray to the Lord for me so that nothing you have said may happen to me.” **25**After they had further proclaimed the word of the Lord and testified about Jesus, Peter and John returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many Samaritan villages.

Philip and the Ethiopian

**26**Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Go south to the road the desert road - that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” **27**So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of the Kandake (which means “queen of the Ethiopians”). This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, **28**and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet. **29**The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.”

**30**Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. “Do you understand what you are reading?” Philip asked. **31**“How can I,” he said, “unless someone explains it to me?” So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. **32**This is the passage of Scripture the eunuch was reading: “He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth. **33**In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth.”*(Isaiah 53:7-8)* 34The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?” 35Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

**36**As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?” **[37]**Philip said, “If you believe with all of your heart you may.” **38**And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. **39**When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing. **40**Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea.

Saul’s Conversion

**9**Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord’s disciples. He went to the high priest **2**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. **3**As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. **4**He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” 5“Who are you, Lord?” Saul asked. “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,” he replied. 6“Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”

**7**The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. **8**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. **9**For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything. **10**In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, “Ananias!” “Yes, Lord,” he answered.

**11**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. **12**In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight.” **13**“Lord,” Ananias answered, “I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem. **14**And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name.”

15But 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. 16I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.”

**17**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.” **18**Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, **19**and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

Saul in Damascus and Jerusalem

Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. 20At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. 21All 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?” 22Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Messiah.

**23**After many days had gone by, there was a conspiracy among the Jews to kill him, **24**but Saul learned of their plan. Day and night they kept close watch on the city gates in order to kill him. **25**But his followers took him by night and lowered him in a basket through an opening in the wall.

**26**When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. **27**But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus. **28**So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. **29**He talked and debated with the Hellenistic Jews, but they tried to kill him. **30**When the believers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus. 31Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers.

Aeneas and Dorcas

32As Peter traveled about the country, he went to visit the Lord’s people who lived in Lydda. 33There he found a man named Aeneas, who was paralyzed and had been bedridden for eight years. 34“Aeneas,” Peter said to him, “Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and roll up your mat.” Immediately Aeneas got up. 35All those who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.

**36**In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (in Greek her name is Dorcas); she was always doing good and helping the poor. **37**About that time she became sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room. **38**Lydda was near Joppa; so when the disciples heard that Peter was in Lydda, they sent two men to him and urged him, “Please come at once!” **39**Peter went with them, and when he arrived he was taken upstairs to the room. All the widows stood around him, crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them.

40Peter sent them all out of the room; then he got down on his knees and prayed. Turning toward the dead woman, he said, “Tabitha, get up.” She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up. 41He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet. Then he called for the believers, especially the widows, and presented her to them alive. 42This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord. 43Peter stayed in Joppa for some time with a tanner named Simon.