



1. How does Saul qualify as the chief antagonist of Jesus' nascent church? (Acts 7:58; 8:1,3; 22:3-5; 1 Timothy 1:13) What was he like? What did he do?
2. What about Saul makes you think he might be the least likely person to be saved in his day? Why did God save Saul? (Galatians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:15, 16)
3. On the road to Damascus, when Jesus got Saul's attention, what two questions did Saul ask? (Acts 9:5; 22:10) How does the second question indicate true repentance?
4. Put yourself in Saul's place. What would have gone through your mind upon hearing the Lord's answers? (9:5-6)
5. Why do you think Saul went without food or drink for three days? What was he doing? (9:9)
6. What do we know about Ananias? (Acts 9:10; 22:12)
7. Ananias had a divine appointment assigned to him. Why was it important for it to be Ananias and not someone else? What gave Ananias pause? Do you think it was justified? How did God graciously deal with it? What could have happened if he had failed to make that appointment? (9:11-15)
8. What was Saul occupied with after his conversion? What opposition did he meet up with? How do we see his determination to fulfill his calling? (9:20-29)
9. Barnabas seems to be a man who does not need to be told to do something. What do you think motivated Barnabas? What character traits stand out in Barnabas? (9:27)
10. Application for us: Can you share about a time in your life that God was nudging you to make a change in course, but you resisted at first and then repented?



## Saul's Conversion - Trajectory of Life

### Leader Notes for Acts 9:1-31

Jesus said in Matthew 16:18, "**I will build My church**; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it." In Acts 1:8 He said, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in **Jerusalem**, and in **all Judea** and **Samaria**, and as far as **the remotest part of the earth**."

On the day of Pentecost, the Lord began building His church. Filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter spoke out boldly and preached forgiveness of sins through Jesus' name. About 3000 souls were added to the church that day.

Peter was predominantly the apostle to the Jews. His home base was Jerusalem. He also helped bridge the gap between Jews and Gentiles by reaching out to Judea and Samaria. Others participated in this outreach as they fled the persecution led by a young man named Saul. Wherever they went, they proclaimed Christ. Philip went to the city of Samaria and preached the good news, and many believed. Peter and John were sent out to confirm and connect with this new group of believers. Returning to Jerusalem, they preached the Gospel to many Samaritan villages. Philip continued preaching the gospel in Judea.

We can see Jesus Christ building a united church. The message went out from Jerusalem to Judea and Samaria, and soon afterwards to the uttermost parts of the world. The messengers are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, called to be witnesses. God demonstrates His great mercy and patience by the changed lives and testimonies of the most unlikely people. Saul is one such individual. He would become primarily the apostle to the Gentiles, reaching out to the uttermost parts of the world.

We see three prominent people in this portion of Scripture: Saul, Ananias, and Barnabas. Jesus used all three, but each one needed a trajectory alteration.

In Saul's conversion, we see the Lord's personal involvement in the miracle of bringing a person to true repentance, thus changing the trajectory of his life. In Saul's case, the change was very pronounced and abrupt – it was like making a U-turn on a two-lane road at 30 mph. After conversion, as believers, we often need a nudge from the Lord, not to change, but to adjust the trajectory of our lives. Overcoming reluctance to change becomes paramount in the life of a believer. God is very gentle in helping us do this, but it requires faith on our part. Ananias is a good example of this.

Saul needed a complete, sudden, and drastic **change** in trajectory. His change was initiated from without. Imagine altering the trajectory of a comet with the impact of a larger, faster moving object.

Ananias needed an **adjustment** in trajectory. Imagine a comet having its trajectory altered by the irresistibly strong, but gentle, gravitational pull of a large planet. The Lord had high confidence that Ananias would go through with it, because he told Saul that Ananias would be coming to see him before He even talked with Ananias about it!

Barnabas didn't seem to need a collision or a pull. His course-adjustment came from within, guided by the Holy Spirit. Think about thrusters used to steer a space capsule to the moon.

We all need course adjustment on our journey. Might you be resisting or avoiding one?

