

# Acts Bible Study

## Class 7 Teacher Notes

### Conversion of Saul (i.e. St. Paul) in Chapter 9

9.1ff Saul seeks to destroy Christianity through threats and if necessary, murder

9.2 Orthodox Christianity is called here "the Way." Note the title of Bp. Kallistos Ware's book THE ORTHODOX WAY. Fidelity to Christ is the heart of Orthodoxy, for He is the WAY, the truth, and the life (Jn. 14.6). Since Christ is the Way and the Church is Christ's Body, it is the orthodox Way

9.3ff Paul the hater of Christianity is enveloped in God's energies. This is the beginning of the conversion of St. Paul (who is called Saul of Tarsus until Acts 13.9).

9.4-5 Christ asks Saul "why are you persecuting me." Notice He does not say "why are you persecuting the Church" but rather "why are you persecuting Me" to let Saul know that to persecute the Church is to persecute Christ.

9.6 Saul is given his first test in trusting God. God tells him "go into the city" and offers no explanation as to why, but lets him know that he will know why later, but is to first obey without knowing why. This is true of us as well. Part of Faith is trusting God. He knows the whole picture, and that is all we need to know. It does not have to make sense to us at the time. At some point in the future it will make sense, but with some things not completely until the age to come, seeing "now in a glass darkly but then face to face." Arise and go...and you will be told what you must do. Our first step is to obey the commandment of God, the next step is to learn the reason why the commandment is given.

9.9-18 Just as Christ was 3 days in the darkness of death, and then was resurrected, so also was Saul in the darkness, and thereafter spiritual "resurrected" in 9.17-18 by being Baptized and receiving the Holy Spirit. This theme of Paul as an image of the death and resurrection of Christ will repeat itself later in Paul's life as well.

9.13-15 Ananias objects to going unto Saul because of what Saul had done, but the

Lord tells Ananias that Saul is chosen to bear the name of Christ before the Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel

9.23 The Jewish leaders that were not Christian plot to kill Paul just as they plotted to kill Christ, and just as Paul at one time plotted to kill the followers of Christ, and would repeat itself cf. vs .29)

9.31 “Then the Church throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and was edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit they were multiplied” This is important since it identifies one Church in various places. This is the ecclesiology that the Orthodox Church still upholds, that when we speak of “churches” we are speaking of the One Church that dwells in various places...The Church that sojourns Corinth, the Church at Jerusalem, the Church the dwells in Damascus, the Church that praises God from Antioch, etc. It is one Church sojourning throughout the world with its eternal citizenship in heaven.

9.32 “The saints who dwell in Lydda,” i.e. the Church that dwells in Lydda. Again, this is the local principle of the Church

9.34 St. Peter does not say “I heal you” but rather “Christ heals you.” We find this same prayer in the traditional forms of absolution, for example in the office of Confession: God forgive you. However, as we know, the prayer “I forgive you” crept in from post-council of Trent Roman practice in Russia (ego te absolvo), although a return to original early practice is underway.

9.35 The witnessing of this healing miracle of Christ through the hand of St. Peter caused all in the towns of Lydda and Sharon to convert to Christian discipleship.

9.36ff The disciple Tabitha dies and is resurrected by St. Peter, in a manner that reminds us of Christ’s resurrection of Lazarus, and also the raising of the “little girl” of Mark 5.41.

