

What Happened On Straight Street

Acts 9:1-22

9 And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, ² And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. ³ And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: ⁴ And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? ⁵ And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. ⁶ And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. ⁷ And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. ⁸ And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. ⁹ And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink. ¹⁰ And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. ¹¹ And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, ¹² And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight. ¹³ 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. 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: ¹⁶ For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake. ¹⁷ And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. ¹⁸ And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized. ¹⁹ And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. ²⁰ 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? ²² But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.

For this study we shall focus on the words “Straight Street”, from verse 11. I want to make this the focal point of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. Which we know was the enemy of Christ and His Church who was bent on exterminating the Christians and then he was saved!

Saul thought Jesus was an impostor and that Christians were deceived, but dramatically Jesus met him (verses 3-5). Immediately this proud man was humbled – convicted, converted and commissioned to do the work of the Lord. It was, of course, a miracle, as every conversion is. Then the Lord spoke to Ananias and sent him to encourage Saul (verse 11). Ananias could not believe that this man was actually praying! – but in obedience he sought out Saul and helped him (verses 10-18). With that let’s talk about what happened on Straight Street.

1. It was the street where a man was gloriously converted

No-one becomes a Christian apart from conversion as it says in Matthew 18:3, *³ And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

Saul had a revelation of the risen Lord in all His glory, and when he saw Him he was at once convinced that Jesus was no impostor; He was alive, He was the Son of God, His death was unique, He had risen from the dead, He was the true Messiah, He was the Saviour of the world and He was worthy of Saul’s devotion.

This was the heavenly vision that Saul had, and to which he was not disobedient Acts 26:19 says; *¹⁹ Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:*

It was in the home of Judas on Straight Street that he began to come into the assurance of the Saviour’s love and grace.

2. It was the street where a man really began to pray

We are told about this in verse 11. Of course, Saul had said many prayers as a very religious man but his praying had been a formal matter. Like the Pharisees (Luke 18:11), he had prayed “about himself”. What a difference after his true conversion, he was humbled before the Lord and he lifted up his heart in true worship!

This raises the question, ‘How often do we say our prayers humbled before the Lord?’

3. It was the street where a man discovered God’s will for his life

God leads His people one step at a time like it says in Psalm 37:23-24, ²³ The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way. ²⁴ Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand.

We learn here that God had a plan for Saul’s life, as He has for yours; read Acts 9:6,15-16. ⁶ *And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.*

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: ¹⁶ For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.*

How amazing it is to discover God’s plan for your life! We should be constantly praying the prayer in Acts 9:6, Lord what will thou have me do, and taking note of John 2:5!, ⁵ *His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.*

We must always be listening to the Lord and then just do what He tells us to do!

4. It was the street where a man was filled with the Holy Spirit

At the very beginning of his new life Saul not only came to know the Lord as his Saviour (Acts 4:12); he was not only born into the family of God (John 1:12-14); but he was filled with the Holy Spirit (verse 17).

John 1:12-14 says; ¹² *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:* ¹³ *Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.* ¹⁴ *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*

This is God's provision for each and every one of His children. It was necessary for Saul to be filled with the Holy Spirit so that he might live for the Lord and serve Him effectively, and this gracious infilling of God's Spirit is necessary and available for you and for me every day. It is great when a new convert is led at once to understand something of the ministry and to experience the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

5. It was the street where a man openly identified himself with the Lord and His people

Think what a great thing this was for Saul to do. He had been an enemy of the Lord and of Christians; but look at verse 18! At once, on coming to know Christ, "he got up and was baptized".

Think what this meant for Saul, the enemy, persecutor, the infidel, to take this step! Some may have said, 'I wonder if it's real...if he's really converted...whether it will last?'

We know the answer to these questions, but have we really identified ourselves with the Lord and with His people in accordance with His own command and desire? – look up Mark 16:16. ¹⁶ *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*

6. It was the street where a man was introduced into a new and wonderful fellowship

Now that he was a Christian Saul came into fellowship with the saints. Ephesians 2:19 says; ¹⁹ *Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;*

Saul was in the family of the redeemed, he belonged to the royal family of heaven. To see this from our study verses, notice that as soon as he was converted, he came into fellowship:

1. *With the Lord Jesus Himself* (verses 5-6).
2. *With Judas*, presumably a believer (verse 11).
3. *With Ananias* (verse 17).
4. *With those who baptized him* (verse 18).
5. *With those who fed him* (verse 19).
6. *With the disciples* (verse 19).
7. *With others at Damascus* (verse 22).

Galatians 3:13 says; ¹³ *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:*

So Jesus took on the curse for us and now like it says in Ephesians 3:15; ¹⁵ *Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named*, we are part of the family of God!

7. It was the street where a man became a living witness for the Lord

Look again at verses 20-22: Saul not only became a Christian, but from the start he became a Spirit-filled, witnessing Christian.

Straight Street was famous because of what happened on it. Is there a street, a place somewhere on this earth where all this has happened to you? If so, thank God!

If not, why should this not happen now? – because the Lord is waiting to do all this for you. If you will say to Him, “Who are you Lord?”, then He will reply, “I am Jesus...”. Then you can say to Him, “My Lord and my God!” I will follow and serve you for the rest of my days.

As we start off the New Year we need to make the same commitment to the Lord that Saul did on Straight Street? To follow the Lord wherever He may lead and to commit to Him fully.