

## That You May Receive Your Sight (Acts 9:10-18)<sup>a</sup>

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### Context

1. **Church formed at Pentecost (Acts 2)**
2. **Growing, but also experiencing opposition**
3. **Major source of opposition: Judaism which rejected (and still rejects) Jesus as Messiah**
4. **Major opponent: Saul of Tarsus**
5. **On the road to Damascus to persecute Christians, God turns Saul's world upside down**
6. **Last time: when Saul was in radical opposition to God, God's sovereignly intervened and brought him to faith**

As Ananias was instructed to tell Saul, *The God of our fathers has chosen you that you should know His will, and see the Just One, and hear the voice of His mouth. For you will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard.* (Acts [22:14-15](#))

7. **Today: God begins the process of restoring Paul and redirecting his purpose**

### Passage (Acts [9:10-18](#))

*[10] Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord." [11] So the Lord said to him, "Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying. [12] And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he might receive his sight." [13] Then Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. [14] And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name." [15] But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. [16] For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake." [17] And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." [18] Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized.<sup>1</sup>*

## Why was Saul blinded?

1. **Acts 9:8-9** - *Then Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened he saw no one. But they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.*
2. **A radical juxtaposition: the incredible brightness of Jesus' manifest glory vs. the complete darkness of Paul**
  - A. **Acts 22:11** - *And since I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of those who were with me, I came into Damascus.*
  - B. **Acts 26:13** - *at midday, O king, along the road I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those who journeyed with me.*
3. **As an object lesson**
  - A. Consider Paul's incredible zeal
  - B. Consider Paul's great intelligence
  - C. Consider Paul's expansive knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures, the Old Testament
  - D. Yet . . . Paul was *spiritually blind!*
  - E. It would seem God had made him *physically blind* as an object lesson: to reveal the great spiritual darkness which lay heavy over Paul's mind and heart
    - I. Consider the unusual affliction with which Jesus struck Paul
      - a. **Acts 9:18** - *Immediately there fell from his eyes [something] like scales, . . .*
        - i. scales = • ♦ “%[epides], flake
          - Used of a fish *scale*, seed *hull*, egg *shell*, fruit *peel*
          - Thought to perhaps be layers of skin, possibly *scabs*
      - b. **Regained his sight, but were there lingering effects?**
        - i. Gal. 4:13-15 - *You know that because of physical infirmity I preached the gospel to you at the first. And my trial which was in my flesh you did not despise or reject, but you received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. What then was the blessing*

*you enjoyed? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me.*“CONYBEARE and HOWSON think that this particular form of proverb was used with reference to a weakness in Paul's eyes, connected with a nervous frame, perhaps affected by the brightness of the vision described, Acts [22:11](#); 2Cor. [12:1-7](#).”<sup>2</sup>

- ii. Mention of physical infirmity, trial in his flesh
- iii. Why would they have wanted to give him their eyes?
- iv. Merely a proverbial saying? Perhaps not.
- v. Gal. [6:11](#) - See *with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand!*<sup>3</sup>
- vi. Could it have been God's purpose to leave Paul with a reminder of his former condition and affliction?

## II. What might Paul have been doing during those three days?

- a. His whole world had been turned upside down . . . and now he was blind, completely dependent on God.
- b. Mourning? Repenting? Weeping?
- c. Rev. [1:7](#) - ***Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.***
- d. Praying!

## III. Saul was now on the “Straighter Road”

### F. Ultimately, it appears that God blinded Paul and gave back his sight as an object lesson

- I. Consider Paul's commission from God: Acts [26:17-18](#) - ***I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.***

## Spiritual Blindness

### 1. Paul explained this blindness in his letter to the church at Corinth

- A. Concerning his brethren, the Jews: 2Cor. [3:14-16](#) - . . . ***their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of***

**the Old Testament, because *the veil is taken away in Christ*. But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. Nevertheless *when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away*.**

- B. **2Cor. 4:3-6 - But even if our gospel is veiled, *it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them*. For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. For *it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*.**

## 2. Principles

- A. **Blinding of both heart and mind — a comprehensive disability: complete inability to see spiritual truth sitting right in front of us!**
- B. **Reading the Scripture with a veiled heart: knowledge of the Bible does not save (witness the many lost seminary professors)**
- C. **The god of this age aids and abets the process, especially—in our day—through the media**
- I. **A constant barrage of accusations against the Bible, the history it relates, the truths it espouses**
  - II. **An entrenched denial of creation by an intelligent being and promotion of the only other game in town: evolution driven by chance and time**
  - III. **An endless line of “experts” in history and science—testifying against the Bible**
  - IV. **The wholesale suppression of testimony by experts of equal or superior qualifications who uphold the Bible worldview**
- D. **As with Paul, *the veil is taken away in Christ***
- I. **This is why we don’t give extensive counsel to the unsaved concerning their problems: we focus on bringing the light!**
  - II. **This is why secular psychology is ultimately bankrupt: not just *unwilling*, but *unable* to identify the causes of much which afflicts our society**

**III. This is why salvation is a radical event: a “night and day” transformation from complete darkness to light**

**E. As with Paul, *it is God who commands light to shine out of darkness***

- I. **God alludes to Genesis as an illustration of how man’s darkness turns to light**
- II. **Moses wrote: *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Then God said, “Let there be light” ; and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. (Gen. 1:1-4)***
- III. **John wrote: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.***
  - a. **Before Christ, we don’t get it! Unless God throws the switch to turn on the light, we’ll never will get it!**
- IV. **Paul had no intention whatsoever of joining what he considered to be this heretical sect within Judaism called “The Way”**
  - a. **Paul originally asked *letters from [the high priest] to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem*. (Acts 9:2)**
  - b. **Later, Paul witnessed before Felix, *But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets*. (Acts 24:14)**
  - c. **What brought about this dramatic reversal in Paul’s beliefs? The direct intervention of God!**

**3. Admitting Our Blindness**

**A. Jesus’ object lesson recorded in chapter 9 of John’s gospel**

- B. **The need to admit our blindness—else we cannot come to the light**
- C. **The “accidental” encounter: *Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”* (John 9:1-2)**
- I. **This is, in itself, a somewhat blind question because all men are born blind!**
- D. **After the miraculous healing: *Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind.* (John 9:32)**
- E. **The object lesson: . . . *Jesus said, “For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind.” Then some of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these words, and said to Him, “Are we blind also?” Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, ‘We see.’ Therefore your sin remains.”* (John 9:39-41)**
- F. **Can you see your blindness? Will you acknowledge it, admit it?**
- G. **Until you do, you cannot be saved.**

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**Endnotes:**

1. [NKJV](#), (Acts [9:10-18](#))
2. [Ref-0187](#), Gal. 4:15
3. Translators and interpreters are divided as to whether Paul refers here to the size of the characters making up his signature, or the length of his overall letters. Paul connects the size with the unusual fact of his having written in his own hand. This argues for understanding this verse as describing the large size of the individual characters composing the letter as would befit someone with poor vision.

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**Sources:**

- NKJV** Unless indicated otherwise, all Scripture references are from the *New King James Version*, copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
- Ref-** Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown, *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New*

**0187** *Testaments* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

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**Links Mentioned Above**

a - See [http://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Acts\\_by\\_Tony\\_Garland/29\\_Acts\\_9\\_10-18/index.htm](http://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Acts_by_Tony_Garland/29_Acts_9_10-18/index.htm).

b - See <http://www.spiritandtruth.org/id/tg.htm>.

c - See <http://www.spiritandtruth.org>.