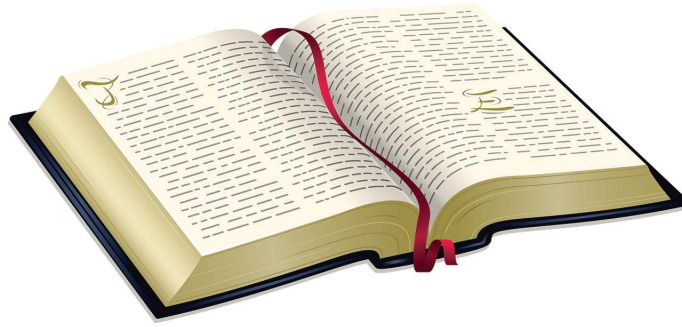


toServe Bible Study - WHS-09



Acts - Lesson 3 of 7

Answer Sheet New International Version (NIV)

Chapters 9 - 12

What is the story of Saul of Tarsus before he became the apostle Paul

It is difficult to overestimate the influence of the Apostle Paul. He is known worldwide as one of the greatest Christian missionaries. His inspired writings cover a large portion of the New Testament, and it is safe to say that he remains one of the most read authors in human history. His abrupt turnaround from zealous persecutor of Christians to one of Christianity's greatest proponents surely shaped the history of the early Christian church. But who was Saul of Tarsus before he became the Apostle Paul? What do we know about his life prior to meeting Christ on the Damascus Road?

Saul of Tarsus was born in approximately AD 5 in the city of Tarsus in Cilicia (in modern-day Turkey). He was born to Jewish parents who possessed Roman citizenship, a coveted privilege that their son would also possess. In about AD 10, Saul's family moved to Jerusalem. Sometime between AD 15—20 Saul began his studies of the Hebrew Scriptures in the city of Jerusalem under Rabbi Gamaliel. It was under Gamaliel that Saul would begin an in-depth study of the Law with the famous rabbi.

There has been some debate over whether Saul was raised in Jerusalem or in his birthplace of Tarsus, but a straightforward reading of his own comments indicates that Jerusalem was his boyhood home, according to Acts 22:3. We know that Paul's sister's son was in Jerusalem after Paul's conversion, according to Acts 23:16, which lends weight to the idea that Paul's entire family had moved to Jerusalem when he was young.

Chapter 9

Please read all of Acts Chapter 9 ☐ Check

1. (v. 9:2) While still breathing threats against the disciples, what did Saul ask the high priest for?

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.

2. (vs. 9:4-5) As Saul journeyed towards, and was approaching Damascus, suddenly a light shone around him from Heaven, then he fell to the ground. He heard a voice saying?

"Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

After hearing the voice what was Saul's question?

"Who are you, Lord?"

What did the voice say?

"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,"

3. (v. 9:9) What was the physical effect of the bright light from heaven and Saul falling to the ground/earth?

For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.

4. (vs. 9:13-14) The Lord had a task for a disciple named Ananias. He came to him in a vision; *"Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus"*. Why was Ananias afraid of doing this?

"I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem.

And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name."

5. (vs. 9:17-18) When Ananias found Saul he first referred to him as “Brother Saul”, then laid/placed his hands on him. List 3 to 4 things that happen to Saul after that?

1. that you may see again
2. be filled with the Holy Spirit.”
3. something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes,
4. He got up and was baptized,

6. (v. 9:20) After a short rest, what extremely dangerous act did Saul start doing?

He began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God.

7. What are the strong words at the end of verse 9:22 that show the strength of Saul, full of the Holy Spirit, ability to preach the gospel?

proving that Jesus is the Messiah.

Note: Read Acts 9:19

It’s very important to understand what took place after Saul’s “Road to Damascus” Conversion In **Galatians 1:13-18**, Paul explained more about what happened during these many days. He described how he went to Arabia for a period of time, and then returned to Damascus. After his return to Damascus he went to Jerusalem. Paul spent a total of three years in Damascus and Arabia.

*Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter,
and remained with him fifteen days.*

Galatians 1:18

8. In your own words, why were the disciples in Jerusalem afraid to join up with Saul?

Who was the first disciple to take him in? Barnabas

9. (v.9:35) After Peter traveling through out the county he came to Lydda. There he found a man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden and was paralyzed for eight years. Peter said to him, “Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you. Arise and make your bed”. Then he immediately rose. What was the result of this miracle?

All those who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.

Christians being called saints

Acts 9:32 and 41 mention the saints in Lydda and Joppa. This is the first time Christians are referred to as saints in Acts. When the Bible calls Christians saints, the idea isn't of a super-perfect people; the idea is of a people who are different. Saints are set apart from the world at large; they are distinctive.

10. (v. 9:42) Verses 9:36-41 tells the story of a disciple named Tabitha who lived in Joppa, that became sick and died. Since Lydda was near Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent for him to come heal her. When he arrived he knelt down and prayed, turning to the body he said, “Tabitha, arise.” And he gave her his hand and raised her up. Then, calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. What was the result of this miracle?

This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord.

Chapter 10

Please read all of Acts Chapter 10 ☐ Check

Caesarea Maritima is a seaport in Samaria on the coast of the Mediterranean. It is traditionally the capital of the Roman leaders, though Pilate chose to live in Jerusalem. It was built by Herod the Great and named after Caesar Augustus. There is another Caesarea in Philippi, north of the Sea of Galilee, where Peter declared that Jesus is the Messiah (Mark 8:27–29). At the time of these events, the leader in Caesarea is probably Herod Agrippa I (Acts 12:1).

Centurion is a commander of 100 soldiers.

The Italian Regiment was a Roman military cohort made up of volunteers from Italy who were stationed in Caesarea. The cohort was mostly made up of Italians who were unable to serve in the elite unit of the Imperial Roman army.

1. (vs. 10:1-2) The first 43 verses in Acts, Chapter 10 is all about Cornelius. Who was this man, Cornelius?

A centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment.

He and all his family were devout and God-fearing;

he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly.

2. (v. 10:5) Cornelius saw/had a vision of an angel of God saying, *“Cornelius! Your prayers and gifts/alms to the poor have been received by God as an offering”*. What next did the angel of God ask Cornelius to do?

Send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter.

3. (v. 10:7) When the angel who had spoken to him had departed, what did he do next?

He called two of his servants and a devout soldier who was one of his attendants.

Peter's Vision

The four corners of the sheet described in Acts 10:11 may represent the "four corners" of the world. In the sheet are "all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air" (Acts 10:12). A voice tells Peter to kill and eat the animals, (Acts 10:13) but some of these creatures are not allowed by Mosaic law. The animals represent the people of the world who have been elected by God—some are devout Jews and some aren't, but Jesus wants Peter to accept them all.

4. (v. 10:26) As Peter was coming into Cornelius' house, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet. How did Peter respond to this?

Peter made him get up. "Stand up," he said, "I am only a man myself."

5. In verse 10:28 we read; *"God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean"*. During Peter's vision, back in verses 10:9-16 the angel of God showed Peter this in which one of these verses? 15

6. Verse 10:28 gives us the main purpose of the vision (10:9-16) that God gave Peter. What did Peter say about it? it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile.

What did God say, "it is not, or not to do"? God has shown me
that I should not call anyone impure or unclean.

7. (vs. 10:34-43) During the preaching of Peter to Cornelius' household, Peter tells them that after Jesus rose from the dead, He commanded/ordered them to do what?
He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead.
-

8. (vs. 10:44-45) While Peter was still speaking to Cornelius' household, the circumcised Jews were astonished/amazed for what reason?
that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles.
-

Chapter 11

Please read all of Acts Chapter 11 ☐ Check

1. (v. 11:18) Starting in verse 11:2, all the way through verse 11:16 Peter recounts the vision that God gave him, then goes into the home of Cornelius, a gentile, to preach the Good News. How did the circumcised Jewish believers react to Peter's story?

they had no further objections and praised God, saying, "So then, even to Gentiles God has granted repentance that leads to life."

The church at Antioch of Syria plays a crucial role in the book of Acts. Here believers were first called Christians (Acts 11:26). With its mixture of Jews and Gentiles, the church at Antioch became fertile ground for the growth and spread of Christianity and a model congregation in the early days of the new Christian church.

Antioch of Syria was one of the largest cities in the first-century Roman world, accommodating a population between 100,000 and 300,000. The city was home to a wealthy and thriving Jewish community. The first mention of Antioch in the New Testament is in reference to Nicolas, a Gentile convert to Christianity who was one of seven Greek-speaking (Hellenist) leaders chosen to serve as deacons at the church in Jerusalem (Acts 6:1–7).

The city's location at a chief trade intersection between Egypt, Asia Minor, Greece, Italy, and Mesopotamia made the church at Antioch a strategic hub for spreading the gospel.

1. Starting in verse 11:19 we are told of how the church in Antioch became established. What was the result of these Greek speaking Gentiles from Cyprus and Cyrene as they preached the Good News about the Lord Jesus?

a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.

2. Chapter 11 ends by telling the story of a prophet that came to Antioch from Jerusalem. Through the Spirit he predicted a famine spreading throughout the Roman world. How did the brothers and sisters in Antioch react to help those in Judea/Jerusalem?

This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.

Who Was Barnabas

In the book of Acts, we find a Levite from Cyprus named Joses (Acts 4:36), whom the apostles called Barnabas. That nickname, translated *“Son of Encouragement”* (Acts 4:36-37) or *“Son of Exhortation”* was probably given to him because of his inclination to serve others, (Acts 4:36-37, 9:27) and his willingness to do whatever church leaders needed (Acts 11:25-30). He is referred to as a *“good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith.”* Through his ministry, *“a great number of people were brought to the Lord”* (Acts 11:24).

After that first trip, Paul and Barnabas began planning their next journey. Barnabas wanted to take his cousin, but Paul refused, and a rift grew between them to the point that they parted company (Acts 15:36-41). Barnabas, true to his nickname, took John Mark and spent time discipling him. That ministry was so effective that, years later, Paul specifically asked for John Mark to come to him, as Mark had matured to the point of becoming helpful to Paul in his ministry (2 Timothy 4:11).

As the early church began to grow, in spite of Herod’s persecution, Barnabas was called by the Holy Spirit to go with Paul on a missionary journey. Barnabas’ cousin, John Mark, served him and Paul as their assistant (Acts 13:5). During that first mission trip, for an unspecified reason, John Mark left them and did not complete the journey (Acts 13:13). However, Barnabas continued with Paul and was with him when Paul’s ministry was redirected to reaching the Gentiles with the gospel (Acts 13:42-52). The only negative mention of Barnabas in Scripture is in reference to an incident in which Peter’s hypocrisy influenced other Jews (including Barnabas) to shun some Gentiles at dinner (Galatians 2:13).



Saul of Tarsus (Paul) and Barnabas

Chapter 12

Please read all of Acts Chapter 12 ☐ Check

Notes:

Up to Acts 12, the church had been on a streak of successes, experiencing one exciting conversion after another. First there was Saul of Tarsus, then the Gentile centurion Cornelius, then the highly successful work among Gentiles (and Jews) in Antioch. But in Acts 12 the ugly opposition, inspired by Satan, again raised its head.

James was certainly not the first Christian to die in faithfulness to Jesus. Stephen (Acts 7:58-60) was martyred before this, and certainly others were also. But the death of James shattered the illusion that somehow the twelve enjoyed a unique Divine protection.

1. (vs. 12:1-3) Herod the king started persecuting some in the church. He started by killing James the brother of John. After that he seized/arrested Peter, for what reason?

he saw that this met with approval among the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter

2. (vs. 12:5-9) Peter was in prison during the Festival of Unleavened Bread/Passover. While in prison the church prayed for him without ceasing. Verses 12:6-9 give the account of how an angel came and rescued Peter. What was Peters thought through this?

he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening; he thought he was seeing a vision.

3. (vs. 12:12-15) When Peter realized that an angel of the Lord had indeed got him out of prison, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John, also called Mark and knocked on the door. A girl named Rhoda came to the door. When she saw it was Peter, she ran back inside and told the others. What was their response?

"You're out of your mind," they told her. When she kept insisting that it was so, they said, "It must be his angel."

4. (v. 12:19) After king Herod discovered that Peter had escaped prison, what did he do to the guards?

he cross-examined the guards and ordered that they be executed.

Herod the king:

This was Herod Agrippa I, the grandson of Herod the Great, who ruled in the days of Jesus' birth (Matthew 2:1-16). Herod Agrippa I was also the nephew of Herod Antipas, who had a role in the trial of Jesus (Luke 23:7-12).

5. (vs. 12:21-23) On an appointed day Herod the king put on his royal robes, took his seat upon the throne, and delivered an oration to the people. And the people shouted. "The voice of a god, and not of a man!". What then became of Herod the king?

Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died.

A verse to underline and memorize

*Remove falsehood and lies far from me;
Give me neither poverty nor riches—
Feed me with the food allotted to me;
Lest I be full and deny You, And say, "Who is the Lord?"
Or lest I be poor and steal, And profane the name of my God.*

Proverb 30:8-9 (NKJV)



The two Antioch's

This is a map of 1st Century eastern Mediterranean Sea. The first thing to notice is: we see two Antioch's. The one to the right, known as **Antioch of Syria** is the one that became the main hub of Christianity.

The one you see top/left was know as **Pisidian Antioch**. It became a key landmark of Paul's first missionary journey with Barnabas.

Paul was invited by the elders to preach in the synagogue of Pisidian Antioch, and the two missionaries were enthusiastically received by the townspeople there (Acts 13:14–44). But a group of Jewish leaders who were jealous of Paul's popularity began to slander him (Acts 13:45). Thus, Paul and Barnabas turned their attention to the Gentiles, many of whom rejoiced and believed in the Lord (Acts 13:46–48). Their message of salvation spread throughout the region until Jewish persecutors finally ran Paul and Barnabas out of the city (Acts 13:50).

Straight line mileage distance: Jerusalem to Antioch of Syria = 310 miles.

Jerusalem to Pisidian Antioch = 502 miles.

What Bible Version/Translation did you use for this Lesson?

ESV ☐ KJV ☐ NIV ☐ NKJV ☐ NLT ☐ Other: _____

This way we know what Version/Translation to use when reviewing this lesson.

Use the space below for any questions, comments, and prayer request:

RETURN COMPLETED LESSON TO:

toServe Ministry

PO Box 2945

Weatherford, TX 76086

Date Completed: _____ / _____ / _____

Your Name: _____ ID #: _____

Facility: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____