

## **Discussion Guide (Participant Guide)**

### **Acts 9**

Note: Please refer to the *How To Study The Bible Handbook* while discussing this passage.

#### **Breaking the Ice:**

- Saul has a supernatural encounter with Jesus where a light from heaven literally blinds him and he hears Jesus speak audibly to him. Have you had an encounter with God that you would label as supernatural?

#### **Practicing What Was Preached:**

- Based on the choices you made when you were younger, do you think your younger self would recognize who you are today ? Why or why not?
- Ananias was called by God to restore Saul's sight and help him on his first steps toward following Jesus. How can you be an Ananias to someone else? Describe what that might look like.

#### **Taking a Deeper Look at the Text:**

*Passage:* Acts 9:1-9

*Pray:* Ask God for eyes to see, a mind to understand, and a heart to apply.

### **Observation**

Who:

Main Characters – Saul, the Lord

Secondary Characters – Lord's disciples, high priest, men traveling with Saul

What:

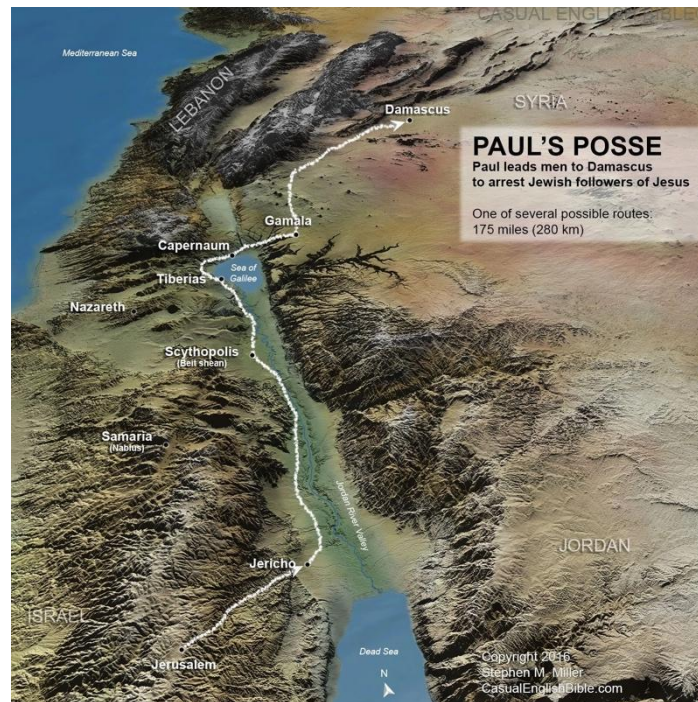
One sentence summary – Saul is traveling on the road to Damascus with intention to persecute Christians when a light from heaven, identified as Jesus, shines around him and blinds him.

When:

The Chronological Significance – Saul had just approved of the killing of Stephen. Here, Saul was confronted by Jesus Himself, and then became a follower of Jesus.

Where:

Setting – On the road to Damascus (see map). This was about 130 miles away from Jerusalem, which was roughly a 6-day journey.



Why:

Significance – Saul's conversion deeply affected the spread of the early church. Paul (formerly Saul) would go on to write nearly half of the New Testament.

How:

Saul has a miraculous encounter with Jesus that leaves him blind and bewildered.

## Things that are EMPHASIZED

Literary Devices – Luke uses the literary device of detailed narration to describe this event, using direct quotes to bring us into it.

### **Interpretation**

- Content: How would you describe what this passage is about in your own words?
- Context & Culture: Saul was on a journey, persecuting Christians under the approval and direction of the highest Jewish official—the high priest, Caiaphas.  
Additionally, Christianity is referred to as “the Way”. This is a fitting name that is seen 5 times throughout the book of Acts which signifies that Christianity wasn’t just a belief or a religion, but a whole different way of life.  
Lastly, Saul hears an audible voice from heaven speak directly to him. According to F.F. Bruce, the rabbi of Saul’s day generally believed that God no longer spoke to man directly, as He did in the days of the prophets, but believed that one could hear the “echo” of God’s voice, what they called “the daughter of the voice of God.” Here, Saul learned that one can hear God directly.
- Consultation: Is there anything about the passage that you still don’t understand? What kind of resource(s) could you use to gain more understanding?

### **Application**

#### *Know Yourself*

- Brandon shared his story about his journey to Jesus. How would you describe your story in 2 minutes or less?
- Are you more of a Saul or Ananias at this point in your life? Are you someone who needs to start your journey with Jesus or to come alongside someone else in their journey with Jesus?

### *Relate*

- Jesus pursued Saul. How has Jesus pursued you?
- Saul's encounter with Jesus was a big wakeup call. Has there been a time in your life where you've had a "fall-to-your-knees" wakeup call? Is there an area of your life right now where you might need a wakeup call?

### *Meditate & Practice*

- See attached "My Story" worksheet. Take a few moments to use the worksheet to craft your story in a way that you can share it with others.

## My Story

\*Sentences are examples/guidelines. They may be helpful to you, but you can word the sentences your way to communicate your story!

### Introduction (1 sentence) —

Hi! My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I've attended Rise City for \_\_\_\_\_ years/months/days.

### My life before Jesus (1-2 sentences) —

I used to \_\_\_\_\_ (example: believe that God didn't exist, be addicted to \_\_\_\_\_, walk through life with no purpose at all, etc.)

### God met me! (1-2 sentences) —

When I was \_\_\_\_\_ (example: 16 years old, at the men's retreat, talking with pastor Brandon, etc.), I realized God \_\_\_\_\_ (example: loved me, died for my sins, has a purpose for my life, etc.). I \_\_\_\_ (share how you responded to God) \_\_\_\_ (example: gave my life to Jesus, decided to become a Christian, etc.).

### My life is different now (1-2 sentences) —

Now, \_\_\_\_ (share what God is doing in/through your life now) \_\_\_\_ (example: God is using me to..., I have a purpose in Christ, I share my faith everywhere I go, I am serving in the kid's ministry, etc.)