



# FAITH BAPTIST CHURCH BIBLE STUDY FELLOWSHIP

Sunday, April 11, 2021

## Report for 3/28/21

Bible Study Attendance	
Online Attendance	11
In Person Attendance	66
<b>Total</b>	<b>77</b>

Tithes and Offerings	
General Offerings	\$5,039.91
Designated Offerings	\$5,790.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$10,829.91</b>

### Prayer Needs

- \* Our country
  - \* Leadership
  - \* Kindness & Compassion
- \* Those affected by COVID  
Be sure to check on folks
- \* Our church family
  - \* Commitment of Faith family to gathering for Worship
  - \* Knowing how to care for people during these trying times

### New at Faith

**Ladies Bible Study**  
Tuesdays 2 PM  
Contact Sarah Ruut  
469-323-9026

### Firepit Fridays at Faith

7:30 pm  
West Parking Lot  
Lifting Prayer to the Lord  
Contact Doug Spivey  
214-557-6867

### Ladies Potluck

**Fellowship Dinner**  
First Thursdays 6:30 - 8 PM  
Contact Laura Dawley  
972-983-9061

### EASY WAYS TO GIVE

- ◇ In Person Offering Boxes or Drop off at the Church Office
- ◇ Text Faithgiving to 73256
- ◇ Log into the Realm Connect app or give online to [faithprinceton.org](http://faithprinceton.org)
- ◇ Mail to PO Box 656, Princeton, TX 75407

### DAILY BIBLE READING PLAN

Apr 4	1 Samuel 28-31	Apr 8	2 Samuel 13-15
Apr 5	2 Samuel 1-3	Apr 9	2 Samuel 16-18
Apr 6	2 Samuel 4-7	Apr 10	2 Samuel 19-21
Apr 7	2 Samuel 8-12	Apr 11	2 Samuel 22-24

Have you had a "Damascus Road" experience?

The conversion of Saul in Acts 9 was so profound that they coined a new phrase to describe it. On the road to Damascus he was confronted by the Living Lord, and it affected him so much that he went from being a church persecutor to a Christ professor. His life was changed for all eternity, and even his name changed to Paul. The same happens to anyone who comes to Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:17 says that *"if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come."* You may never have been filled with the same type of murderous animosity that Saul possessed, but know for certain that if you truly met Christ, then your life truly changed in an instant.

And although Paul met the blinding presence of Jesus on that desert road, pay careful attention that God sent a man named Ananias as a witness to help open Paul's eyes to the Gospel. Acts 9 reminds us of the overarching theme verse found in Acts 1:8: *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."* Ananias allowed himself to be used by God as a witness to Paul; and Paul became a missionary who took the Gospel to "the remotest parts of the earth."

God knows what He is doing, and He wants to use each of us to continue to open blind eyes and produce more Damascus Road experiences! Share your testimony of your experience with Christ with someone this week. Pray for lives to be transformed by the Gospel. Live out your faith as a witness to the saving power of Jesus Christ our Lord.

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# GREAT LEADERS FOR GOD'S CHURCH

BY DR. JERRY VINES

*By the Book*™ A Chapter by  
Chapter Bible Study Series  
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## Let's Begin

*Every conversion is a miracle. Yet, there is something special about the conversion of Saul. Saul's conversion is perhaps the most remarkable conversion in the history of the Christian faith. It is a powerful testimony for the reality of Jesus and His Gospel. In fact, he later tells Timothy, his young protégé, that when he was converted, he stood as a pattern for all those who would believe after him (1 Tim. 1:15-16). In other words, Paul was convinced if God could save him, He could save anybody!*

*Chapter nine unfolds for us the account of how Jesus laid hold of Paul and tamed him, turning the persecutor into the preacher. As we investigate Saul's conversion, we'll follow the outline below:*

- I. **The Making of a Christian Leader (vv. 1-20)**
- II. **The Molding of a Christian Leader (vv. 21-31)**
- III. **The Ministry of a Christian Leader (vv. 32-43)**

## I. The Making of a Christian Leader (vv. 1-20)

Luke's record begins with a sweeping scope, describing the purpose of Saul of Tarsus, "And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, 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" (vv. 1-2). His goal was not secretive. Indeed, Saul was following proper protocol.

Who is this man? What drives him to such frantic activity? Why does he so hate the Christian faith? Answers to these questions await us as we explore how God makes a Christian leader.

First, let's observe Saul's condition. His condition reveals two traits. On the one hand, we are informed how *angry* Saul was; and on the other, how *aggressive* he remained. The Bible hands us a picture of a wild animal when it speaks of Saul. He came breathing out "threatenings and slaughter" like a snorting wild boar. He possessed no mercy for Christians, dragging them back to Jerusalem, bound, and if he had his way, doomed to death!

### Reflection Connection

*Is it possible to imagine a persecution toward Christians in our day similar to the persecution which Saul led against Christians in his? Why or why not?*

Tarsus was Saul's birthplace, a Greek city and an influential university center. Without doubt, Saul acquired a sophisticated education, perhaps the best education possible in those days. Also, he was of the royal blood of Israel — a "Hebrew of the Hebrews," as he would later describe to the Philippians (3:5). More significantly, however, Saul was a Pharisee. Pharisees were a part of the purest strain of Jewish religion. They were highly respected for their knowledge and their piety.

As religious as he was, he was thoroughly dissatisfied spiritually. It wasn't working; it wasn't real. Trying hard to please God on the outside, his inner man was torn apart. Rather than dealing with his emptiness, he persisted in further anger despite his spiritual conflict. Religion never satisfies. In fact, religion cannot satisfy. Nonetheless, billions of people search for something more, not yet knowing only Jesus Christ can fulfill their need.

Thus, because Saul inwardly possessed serious doubts, he unfortunately became outwardly plagued with destructive aggression. It's common



among those who struggle with doubt to be driven even harder to silence those doubts. Saul was willing to take his inquisition to strange cities. But God was willing to bestow His grace on wicked sinners.

Secondly, let's notice Saul's conviction (vv. 3-9). Receiving his papers from the proper authorities, he quickly traveled to Damascus. Though not in the text, it's easy to imagine pockets of praying Christians assembled all over the little city of Damascus, requesting that the Lord Jesus Christ would protect them and keep them in such a dark hour. Deliverance came!

Around high noon, Saul had a vision, "And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven" (v. 3). This "light from heaven" was none other than the crucified but risen Lord Jesus. Almost immediately, Saul dropped to his knees as he heard Christ ask, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (v. 4). This experience was so powerful Paul could rehearse it in detail several years later (2 Cor. 4:6).

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side down.*

### Reflection Connection

*Dr. Vines mentions Saul's change from a religious man to a praying man. What differences do you see between the two? Explain.*

Thirdly, let's notice Saul's conversion (vv. 10-20). Saul's transformation was both personal and unmistakably public. He dramatically changed from being a religious man to a praying man (v. 11). There is a big difference. Also, his purpose in life was turned upside down. Whereas before he sought to *fight* Christians, afterward he would seek to *fellowship* with Christians. Finally, the power he had before, he obtained from human authorities (v. 2). Paul's power now stemmed from the filling of the Holy Spirit (v. 17).

## II. The Molding of a Christian Leader (vv. 21-31)

Becoming a Christian leader always has a beginning. The obvious beginning for a leader in the church is a person's conversion. Being converted constitutes the making of a Christian leader. Yet it does not stop there. Made leaders must become molded leaders. Conversion makes leaders but commitment molds them.

Paul was God's chosen vessel to bear His name before the Gentiles and the children of Israel (v. 15). The greatest men God uses are but vessels of clay which He condescends to use (cp. 2 Cor. 4:7). Being God's vessel means being molded by God for His own specific purpose.

Geographical locations figure prominently in the early years of Saul's Christian life —Arabia, Damascus, Jerusalem, and Tarsus (cp. Gal. 1:15-21). In each place God used a different experience to mold Saul. Through these experiences Saul was being prepared for a ministry which literally shook the world. Let's look at these four locations to see how God molded Saul.

*The first location is Arabia.* More than anything else, solitude would mold Saul here (cp. Gal. 1:15-17). Sometimes it takes seclusion for spiritual maturity to seed. Moses was in seclusion when he saw the burning bush. Elijah roamed in despair before he drank from the wells of inspiration. John the Baptist lived



### Reflection Connection

*How much emphasis do you place on solitude? Explain. Do you think our culture caters to healthy solitude? Why or why not?*

in the desert before he ministered in the town. Jesus spent eighteen years at a carpenter's table before He spent three years in public ministry. Also, the Lord Jesus was in extreme desert solitude, being tempted by Satan, before He demonstrated what His baptism signified — He is Messiah!

Legitimately, someone may ask, "What possible assistance could solitude offer me in my spiritual journey?" In other words, what good is solitude? For one thing, solitude gives us a unique opportunity to be with Jesus. Paul wrote, "immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood" (Gal. 1:16). Another reason for solitude is to understand the Bible better. Still another reason for solitude is to experience God's deeper work in one's soul. More than any other time, it was this time in seclusion where religious Saul became praying Paul.

In addition, the result of Saul's solitude was his return with a new Bible. He went into seclusion with Moses, the Psalms, and the Prophets. Upon his return, he brought back Romans, Galatians, and Ephesians in both mouth and heart. Later, they would be in print. His new Bible gave him a new burning and a new burden to share Christ with the world.

*The second location is Damascus.* Solitude is not enough to mold a leader. Therefore, God took Saul to Damascus to teach him *suffering* (cp. Gal. 1:17). Saul's former goal in going to Damascus was to punish people for being Christians. Now he goes to Damascus to preach to people about Christ! Getting there, however, the one who formally persecuted others now became persecuted himself.

Saul should have known this. Jesus Himself warned of his impending persecution, "For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake" (v. 16). This was only the beginning. He was being prepared for even more persecution to come (2 Cor. 11:23-25). God allows suffering today so that we may be prepared for much more suffering tomorrow.

It's not easy for Christians to accept the fact of suffering. It's nonetheless necessary. And, while no one is exempt from suffering, our Sovereign God guarantees our suffering will never be in vain or without purpose. Suffering tempers us, teaches us, and tailors us for His Glory. In the end, suffering makes us tender; that is, we become more humble and sympathetic to others.

*The third location is Jerusalem.* Here Saul learned service (cp. Gal. 1:18). Imagine the memories which flooded his mind as he returned to Jerusalem! After his seclusion, the mother church in Jerusalem would be his "home base" as he ministered the Gospel to people.

As Saul served, he encountered *hesitancy* from the church in accepting him (vv. 26-28). Luke writes: "And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple" (v. 26). Saul had his memories; but so did the church! They recalled very well Saul's madness against the church.

Furthermore, he encountered *history* from Simon Peter. Upon meeting Peter, one of Jesus' closest companions and commissioned apostles, Saul, in effect, said, "Tell me all you can remember about Jesus." The heart of the Christian believer is always wants to know more about Jesus.

Saul would also face *hostility* from the Jews (v. 29). He left Jerusalem arguing their cause only to return arguing Christ's. This led to serious disputes with the

### Reflection Connection

*Do you think it is right to thank God for suffering in your life? Why or why not? Consider this: Do you think it is realistic to thank God? Explain.*



Jewish leaders. In fact, some of the same arguments Stephen had used against Saul and the Sanhedrin, Saul now pressed against the Jews.

The final location is Tarsus. The lesson Saul learned in Tarsus was silence (cp. Gal. 1:21). It may be tempting to equate solitude with silence. This is a mistake. In Tarsus, Saul was going home. There he had family and friends with whom to celebrate and fellowship. Nevertheless, these were days of silence. We really don't know what happened during these days. However, we do have hints of at least two activities which Saul completed.

First, though this was a period of silence, we believe Paul *witnessed* to his faith in Jesus Christ (cp. Acts 15:23, 41). People were saved and churches were planted. Too often we allow ourselves to be convinced that other places are better places to minister than where we presently are. We must do our best where God has now placed us. In fact, God rarely uses those in other places who are not willing to be used where they presently serve.

A second activity we could affirm Saul completing was *waiting*. The Psalmist reminds us, "Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass" (Ps.37:5). Waiting may be among the most serious disciplines with which the believer is challenged. You may feel you are in obscurity, neglected, or even worse, ignored. No. The Master Potter has His eyes on the vessel, His hands molding the instrument to His grand design.

*We must do  
our best where  
God has now  
placed us.*

### III. The Ministry of a Christian Leader (vv. 32-43)

The last part of chapter nine leaves momentarily the ministry of Saul — who would now be known as Paul — and focuses once again on the Apostle Peter. Indicative of this switch is Luke's obvious point that God calls many to leadership. As we observe Peter in these verses, he reminds us of the Lord Jesus. His manner and use of words reflect Christ. In addition, we learn the ministry of the church is varied. In fact, it is like a kaleidoscope. As you turn it and view it from many different angles, you see the variety of things a church is called to do.

As we consider Peter's ministry, there are four particular angles which will occupy our concern. *The first angle we will view is the human side of ministry.* Though Divine in origin, being commissioned by the Lord Jesus Himself, the church's ministry nonetheless is a *human* ministry. The church ministers to people. Therefore, it is centered on people. Note carefully Luke's words which record various individuals to whom Peter ministered: Aeneas, Tabitha, the disciples, saints, and widows (vv. 36-42). Ministry was not just a faceless mass, but people with names and personalities and feelings.

One of the problems we face today concerns an unhealthy, impersonal view toward other human beings. Many feel they are just a number. Jesus is always interested in people. He loves people. He both lived and died for people.

*The second angle we will view is the healing ministry.* There are two miracles recorded in this section. Healing is a vital part of Christian ministry. The day

#### Reflection Connection

*Have you considered what part you play in the church's ministry? Explain. Were you asked, would you be able to answer the question, "What is your spiritual gift?" Why or why not? Be prepared to discuss this with the entire group.*



### Reflection Connection

*On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest and 1 the lowest, how do you rate your concern for people? Take your time and answer as honestly as you can. Using the same standard, how would you rate your church's concern for people? Be honest, but be respectful of your pastor, your staff, and your church family.*

### Golden Greek Nugget

Luke refers to the church in verse two as being “of this way.” This expression, “the way”, was one of the earliest known expressions describing the early church. In almost all of the recent translations of the Bible, it is translated “the Way,” the difference being of course that “way” is capitalized. Many believe there’s a connection between this description and the words of the Lord Jesus when He said, “I am the way” (John 14:6).

of miracles is not passed. However, just as in the New Testament, we must use Biblical discernment in understanding the miracles that God performs.

Therefore, healing must be *accomplished* by the Son of God. Jesus performed many miracles, His heart overflowing with sympathy for every need He saw. The apostles continued to perform acts of healing. God still heals today!

In addition, healing must be *administered* by the Church of God. The Son of God always heals but the Church of God will always administer. Know also healing must be *according* to the Word of God. The Bible keeps us balanced in understanding the ministry of healing today.

*The third angle we will view is the helping ministry.* Dorcas is the prime example of the social aspect in the church’s ministry. Read Luke’s description of Dorcas’ legacy, “Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did” (v. 36). Though many historians conveniently leave the details out, the truth is there were no hospitals, asylums, or leprosariums before Jesus Christ. Indeed these health institutions are direct results of Christian social ministry. Dorcas was a prototype of things to come. She was richly endowed with grace gifts and she faithfully exercised the gifts God had given.

*Finally, the fourth angle we will view is the heavenly ministry.* Each miracle performed or a deed of kindness done resulted in souls being saved for the Glory of God. Thus, we must give priority to this ministry. The salvation of the soul is a greater work than healing the sick or raising the dead. All of the other gifts are at best temporary. Yet, when we have heaven on our hearts, we can be assured that we have the heart of Jesus.

### Wrap Up

*Every church needs great leaders. The making of great leaders begins with conversion. One’s heart and life must be transformed by the power of the Gospel. That’s what made Saul the Apostle Paul. Christ literally made him a new person. Leadership begins there; but leadership does not end there. So, while leaders are made, leaders must also be molded. Through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit, leaders become great because of the greatness of God. And, it is through this making by the Holy Spirit that great leaders become great ministers.*

