**Acts 9:1-2**

\*The Lord’s institution of the Baptist assembly was moving worldwide with the help of Deacons Stephen and Philip and the Sanhedrin henchman Saul! Chapter Nine is a continuation of Chapter Seven with Chapter Eight as a blessed interlude.

\*The *“my church”* movement was not going to be stopped by the “best” agents Satan had (Simon and Saul), since Christ’s Gospel is more powerful than the devil’s devices (Eph. 6:11; II Cor. 4:4).

\*The time was probably the summer of AD 30/31, and young and vigorous Saul, trained in the *Tanak*, and probably in his thirties was in attack mode. In the sixties he called himself *“Paul the aged”* (Phile. 1:9). Under the power of darkness (Col. 1:13) he persecuted the church of God (I Cor. 15:9; I Tim. 1:13; cf. Acts 8:3; 26:10-11).

\*Saul, as an enraged Hebrew of the Hebrews (Phil. 3:5-6), wanted to threaten and slaughter the disciples of the Lord and sought “legal’ warrants to bring members of *“the way”* (Jn. 14:6; Acts 19:23; 22:4; 24:22) back to Jerusalem for another “Stephen session.”

**Acts 9:3**

\*All future Christian history hinged on stopping mad Saul! With great zeal he journeyed 136 miles to Damascus. How would the merciful and gracious Lord handle this impending destruction of His divine institution? *Simply, by a heavenly encounter!* Any other questions?

\*He obtained the attention of Saul with a *“light,” “a great light”* (Acts 22:6), *“above the brightness of the sun”* (Acts 26:13).

**Acts 9:4**

\*Saul fell down and heard a voice coming from the brilliant resurrected and glorified Jesus (Rev. 1:12-15). The words of the voice were in the Hebrew language (Acts 26:14), the language of Heaven (*Alleluia* [Rev. 19:1-6]).

\*Using double iteration, the Lord addressed his Hebrew name *“Saul”* (cf. Gen. 22:11; 46:2; Ex. 3:4; I Sam. 3:10).

\*The stark assertion in the question *“why persecutest thou me”* was pointed and convicting! He had been persecuting “Christians” (= “little Christs”), such as Stephen and Christian men and women.

**Acts 9:5-6**

\*Dazed, Saul used the non-descript “Lord” for identification. The Lord used the “hated” name of *“Jesus”* (cf. 4:7, 12, 17-18, 28, 40). Further, He said *“I am”* (*ego eimi*), identifying with Jehovah of the *Tanak* (Ex. 3:13-14; 6:3; Jn. 18:4-7).

\*Saul was under great pricking conviction, trembling and astonished. He immediately surrendered to the Lord having had a change of heart. 1. He repented of his sins. 2. He believed in the Lord. 3. He called on the Lord. 4. He had *“fruits meet for repentance.”* 5. He submitted to service > *“do?”* The CT/Modern versions omit 5b-6a! The text is true since it is in Acts 26:14!

\*His conversion becomes the *“pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting”* (I Tim. 1:12-16). He preached repentance (Acts 17:30; 26:20) and faith (Acts 16:31) for the elect to obtain salvation (II Tim. 2:10). He believed and preached the Gospel (I Cor. 15:1 ff.)

**Acts 9:7**

\*His colleagues saw the light (Acts 26:13-14), heard but did not understand the voice (Acts 22:9), and did not see Jesus. The supernatural phenomenon was public but the message was private.

**Acts 9:8-9**

\*The glory of the resurrected Lord had blinded Saul and he needed his Jewish cohorts to lead him to the city of Damascus. Living in spiritual darkness, Saul was now experiencing physical darkness. The imprisoner of Baptists was now imprisoned to blindness. Saved Saul had the opportunity to contemplate his regeneration in blindness while fasting for three days. The blindness testified to the brilliance of the resurrected Jesus (Lk. 24:34; Mk. 16:2; Mal. 4:2; Rev. 1:12-16) and nullified any thought that this was a dream, vision, or hallucination, and his companions could testify as well (Acts 22:9)!

**Acts 9:10**

\*Just as the Lord had orchestrated the meeting of Philip and the eunuch (8:26-27), He likewise orchestrated the meeting of the Baptist with the Christian. The disciple Ananias, from the Damascus Baptist Church (cf. v. 18), received a vision with a commission to which he responded in faith, *“Behold, I am here”* (Isa. 6:8-9). He did not know that the task would be strange and difficult!

**Acts 9:11-12**

\*The Lord gave specific geographical details to Ananias (except zip code), including the street *“Straight,” “the house of Judas,”* and someone named not just Saul, but *“Saul of Tarsus,”* for him to find in the large city of Damascus. The man was praying, and by the way, he was the infamous persecutor of Baptists, Saul of Tarsus!

\*Trying to encourage with information, the Lord revealed to the Baptist that the man had seen in a vision a man named Ananias who would be coming to put his hand on him to allow reception of sight!

**Acts 9:13-14**

\*What if the Baptist Ananias disobeyed? Obedience brings great blessings! The hesitant Ananias questioned with objections, such as knowing his fearful name, his murderous testimony, and devilish purpose to bind all Christians!

\*Of course, why was there a Baptist church in Damascus? Because Saul caused the Baptists (*“saints”* [Acts 9:41; Rom. 1:7; I Cor. 1:2; Eph. 4:12; Col. 1:2]) in Jerusalem to scatter (8:1)!

\*Luke’s focus was upon the doctrine of God Who is the “Great Reverser” in human history (Lk. 4:18). He used the great doer of evil to the *“my church”* movement to become the great doer of good. **Saul** went from being the **great persecutor** of Baptists to **Paul** being the **great promoter** of Baptists (Rom. 8:28)! See again Paul’s testimony (I Tim. 1:12-16)!

**Acts 9:15**

\*The Lord remonstrated as He revealed to the Baptist church member the will of God for the saved but un-baptized, non-church member. Saul was in the Kingdom of God (realm of regeneration) but Ananias was in the Church of God (Baptist assembly). The will of God can only be known in the place of Truth!

\*Paul was prepared chosen vessel to bear the name of Jesus to the Gentiles (Gal. 1:15-16; Acts 13-19), and to kings (Acts 26:1-2; 28:19), and to Jews (Acts 13:5, 16; 22:1 ff.).

**Acts 9:16-19**

\*Revealed to Ananias and eventually to Paul, that he would suffer greatly (II Cor.11:23-28). Ananias found him, laid hands on him, called him *“Brother Saul,”* testified to him, facilitated in his sight and Spirit-filling, and was involved in his church membership immersion and his eating/strengthening.

\*Converted and baptized, Saul of Tarsus became an active Baptist in the body of Christ at Damascus (Rom. 6:3-5; 12:1-8)!