

Lord's Day, June 7, 2009	Isaiah 7-10
Monday, June 8	Isaiah 11-14
Tuesday, June 9	Isaiah 15-18
Wednesday, June 10	Isaiah 19-22
Thursday, June 11	Isaiah 23-28
Friday, June 12	Isaiah 29-32
Saturday, June 13	Isaiah 33-35

Lord's Day, June 7, 2009	Nehemiah 4-6; Acts 2:22-47
Monday, June 8	Nehemiah 7-9; Acts 3
Tuesday, June 9	Nehemiah 10-11; Acts 4:1-22
Wednesday, June 10	Nehemiah 12-13; Acts 4:23-37
Thursday, June 11	Esther 1-3; Acts 5:1-21
Friday, June 12	Esther 4-7; Acts 5:22-42
Saturday, June 13	Esther 8-10; Acts 6

C. HIS INITIAL PREACHING IN DAMASCUS

1. He spends some days in Damascus - **Acts 9:19**
2. He immediately begins to preach Jesus - **Acts 9:20-22; 26:19-20**
 - a. As the Christ, the Son of God, and their need to repent
 - b. To the amazement of all who knew him
 - c. Confounding the Jews who were in Damascus

The conversion of Paul was a remarkable event, not only for him personally, but also for the church (cf. **Gal. 1:22-24**). It is not surprising, then, that Paul would often refer to this event (*to be continued*)

Adapted from Mark Copeland's "A Harmony of the Life of Paul"

THE CONVERSION OF PAUL (~A.D. 36)

READINGS: Acts 9: 1-22; 22:3-21; 26: 1-23; Gal. 1:13-23; Phil. 3:4-8

INTRODUCTION

1. Paul began his life known as Saul of Tarsus.
 - a. Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin
 - b. A Hebrew of the Hebrews, a Pharisee and a son of a Pharisee - **Phil. 3:5; Acts 23:6**
2. He was on the "fast track" as far as his Jewish faith was concerned.
 - a. Living according to the strict sect of His religion - **Acts 26:5**
 - b. Advanced in Judaism beyond many contemporaries - **Gal. 1:14**
3. His zeal for Judaism led to his persecution of the church...
 - a. He tried to destroy it - **Gal. 1:13**
 - b. By seeking to imprison and put Christians to death - **Acts 22:3-5**
 - c. This he did because he believed it to be God's will - **Acts 26:9-12**
4. Yet Paul became converted to Christ.
 - a. Which amazed those who first heard him preach - **Acts 9:20-21**
 - b. Whose conversion continues to provide powerful testimony to the resurrection of Christ.

[As we continue this harmony of the life of Paul, we shall now focus our attention on "The Conversion Of Paul", collating what is found in the Scriptures about this remarkable event. We begin with what happened...]

I. ON THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS

A. THE MISSION OF PAUL

1. Paul received permission to bring disciples back from Damascus - **Acts 9:1-2; 22:4-5**
2. Which Paul thought was proper to do - **Acts 26:9-11**

B. THE APPEARANCE OF JESUS

1. Prefaced by a light shining from heaven
 - a. Occurring around noon - **Acts 9:3; 22:6**
 - b. Brighter than the sun, shining around him and those with him - **Acts 26:13**
 - c. Causing them all to fall - **Acts 26:14**
2. Accompanied by a voice speaking to him
 - a. Saying in Hebrew, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" - **Acts 9:4; 22:7; 26:14**
 - b. A voice heard, but not understood by those with him - **Acts 9:7; 22:9**
3. Jesus identifies Himself to Paul
 - a. Paul asks, "Who are You, Lord?" - **Acts 9:5; 22:8; 26:15**
 - 1) At this point, Paul does not know Who he is talking to!
 - 2) But he obviously recognizes His authority!
 - b. The reply: "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting" - **Acts 9:5; 22:8; 26:15**
 - 1) As the Head of the church, Paul was persecuting Him when he persecuted the church which is His body - **Eph. 1:22-23**
 - 2) Note well: what we do or don't do for the church, we do or don't do for Jesus!
 - c. Jesus continues, "It is hard for you to kick against the goads" - **Acts 9:5; 26:14**
 - 1) In his misdirected zeal, Paul had been resisting the will of God
 - 2) E.g., resisting the preaching of such men as Stephen - cf. **Acts 7:51-53**

C. THE SUBMISSION OF PAUL...

1. Still fallen to the earth, he was trembling and astonished - **Acts 9:6**
2. He asked, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" - **Acts 9:6; 22:10** -- At this point, Paul acknowledges both the authority and the identity of Jesus!

D. THE COMMISSION OF JESUS...

1. Paul is told to go into the city
 - a. There he will be told what he must do - **Acts 9:6**
 - b. There he will be told what things are appointed for him to do - **Acts 22:10**

2. Jesus gives him an idea of what to expect - **Acts 26:16-18**
 - a. To become a minister and a witness of things seen, and would be revealed
 - b. To be sent to both Jews and Greeks...
 - 1) To open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God
 - 2) That they might receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance with those sanctified by faith in Jesus
3. Paul proceeds to obey his new Lord - **Acts 9:8; 22:11**
 - a. He arose from the ground, but was blinded by the light
 - b. He is led by the hand to Damascus

II. IN THE CITY OF DAMASCUS

A. HIS THREE DAY WAIT

1. For three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank - **Acts 9:9**
2. He was also praying during this time - cf. **Acts 9:11**

B. THE VISIT BY ANANIAS

1. The Lord appears to Ananias in a vision - **Acts 9:10-16**
 - a. A disciple who lived in Damascus, well respected among the Jews - **Acts 22:12**
 - b. Told to go to the house of Judas, where Paul was praying and had seen a vision of Ananias restoring his sight
 - c. Ananias is reluctant at first, but is reassured by the Lord
2. Ananias visits Paul
 - a. Laying hands on Paul, Ananias relates how he was sent to him - **Acts 9:17**
 - b. Paul's sight is restored - **Acts 9:18; 22:13**
 - c. Ananias relates Paul's mission - **Acts 22:14-15**
 - d. Ananias admonishes Paul to be baptized, and Paul responds - **Acts 22:16; 9:18**
 - 1) Note well: Paul was still in his sins!
 - 2) The vision, his acceptance of Jesus as Lord, his fasting and praying, etc., had not saved him
 - 3) He needed to be baptized in order for his sins to be washed away - cf. **Acts 2:38; 1 Pet. 3:21**
 - e. Paul resumes eating - **Acts 9:19**