

17. May 2025

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

“Saul recovers his sight and proclaims Jesus”

Acts 9:17-25

So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came, has sent me that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized, and took food and was strengthened. For several days he was with the disciples at Damascus. And in the synagogues immediately he proclaimed Jesus, saying, “He is the Son of God.” And all who heard him were amazed, and said, “Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem of those who called on this name? And he has come here for this purpose, to bring them bound before the chief priests.” But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ.

When many days had passed, the Jews plotted to kill him, but their plot became known to Saul. They were watching the gates day and night, to kill him; but his disciples took him by night and let him down over the wall, lowering him in a basket.

Overcome with fear at the words of Jesus, the disciple Ananias set out to find Saul, the fierce persecutor of Christians. The Lord had told him, 'Go, for this is my chosen one.' When Ananias entered the house, he said to Saul, 'Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus has sent me.' Then he laid his hands on Saul, who immediately regained his sight. The enemy of the Christians had become a brother through the Lord. Filled with the Holy Spirit through Ananias' prayer, Saul was baptised. From that moment on, he became a member of the emerging church, and the words that the Lord had spoken about him began to be fulfilled.

We see that Paul started proclaiming the Lord immediately after his conversion. He begins preaching in the synagogues of Damascus. The people could hardly believe it. They all knew him as a persecutor of Christians and could not fathom how this same

man, who had fanatically imprisoned or executed them, could now be standing before them, proclaiming Jesus and showing them that He was the Son of God. What a change!

The Jews of Damascus were confronted with the great mystery of how God can turn a person's life around, turning them from the wrong path and guiding them onto the right one. From the outside, this can sometimes appear to happen quickly, with the person in question changing direction in a short space of time. But only the Lord knows what precedes such a radical transformation.

Undoubtedly, the new convert will still have to undergo a process until the faith he has just embraced takes root and permeates his entire being. However, the decisive moment has already occurred: through God's grace, Paul recognised Jesus as the Son of God and began to publicly confess Him. We often encounter this zeal in people who have experienced true conversion. They want to profess their faith, and above all they wish for others to experience the joy of true conversion and to encounter the Lord. How could it be otherwise? How could one refuse to share with those who do not yet know it that source from which the water of eternal life flows, the source one has just found?

In chapter 22 of the Book of Revelation, the seer John writes:

"Then he showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations" (Rev 22:1-2).

Those who have recognised and experienced this life-giving water will want to share this newfound love with others, as it is greater than anything they have previously experienced. Thus, they put themselves at the service of the Lord. This is what happened with Paul. Evidently, his preaching was powerful and perplexed the Jews. The Holy Spirit had filled him. Moreover, Paul was well versed in the Scriptures and familiar with the Jews' beliefs. After all, he had been a disciple of Gamaliel, as he himself testifies (cf. Acts 22:3). He was therefore able to demonstrate that Jesus was the Messiah expected by the Jews, and it was certainly difficult to refute him. For a time, Paul was able to preach freely in Damascus.

However, it was not long before the same hostility that he had previously felt towards Jesus and the new faith was directed at him. Nor did the testimony of someone like Paul, whose transformation was evident to all, dispel the enmity or change the minds of opponents of Christianity. Their hearts had evidently become hardened, and when this happens, it is difficult for the Lord to touch them.

Paul was now experiencing the persecution of the Jews firsthand; they wanted to kill him and were guarding all the city gates to destroy him. However, since he knew of their plan, he was able to escape with the help of the disciples, who lowered him over the wall in a basket. His hour had not yet come. The Lord will send him to proclaim the Gospel everywhere, and he will only call him back to his eternal homeland once he has accomplished his mission.

Meditation on the day's reading: <https://en.elijamission.net/remaining-in-joy/>

Meditation on the day's Gospel: <https://en.elijamission.net/loving-the-love-of-god-2/>