

**1177 Saul saw great light, Ananias, and Peter raised Tabitha - Acts(9)1-43  
(by Whirlwind)**

**First, let us examine the account of the Lord Jesus appearing to Saul. There are three separate records of this event. We have combined them to align with all the narratives, reconstructing the scene as it unfolded. Second, it describes the Lord instructing Ananias in a vision to baptize Saul and fill him with the Holy Spirit. Here we glimpse the Lord's humor and observe the message He conveyed to Paul during prayer—essentially matching the partial revelation Paul received in the blinding light. Third, it details how Paul, after seeing the great light, proceeded to testify about Jesus as the Christ in his own strength, leading to his eventual fleeing. Fourthly, it describes Paul's preaching in Jerusalem and his subsequent fleeing to Tarsus for refuge. Finally, it mentions two miracles: Peter healing the paralytic Aeneas and raising the disciple Tabitha from the dead.**

**Please note: This article is based on the Sunday (2/1/26) topicwise Bible study. Unless otherwise specified, verses refer to those in NASB95. Past articles referenced can be found on our website, '<https://a-christian-voice.com/>,' under 'On spiritual understanding about life.'**

**1. The three accounts of Christ appearing to Saul**

**"Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. As he was traveling, it happened that he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" And He said, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, but get up and enter the city, and it will be told you what you must do." The men who traveled with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; and leading him by the hand, they brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank."(Acts 9:1-9)**

**The account of Paul (Saul) seeing the great light on the road to Damascus is recorded three times in the Book of Acts: here, in Acts 22:6-11, and in Acts 26:12-18. Because the audiences differ, the accounts are not identical, but they are based on the same event and must be consistent with all the texts. Therefore, we must take the union of the narratives. Below are the other two passages, from which we can extract the union to understand the sequence of events.**

**"But it happened that as I was on my way, approaching Damascus about noontime, a very bright light suddenly flashed from heaven all around me, and I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?' And I answered, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said to me, 'I am Jesus the Nazarene, whom you are**

persecuting.’ And those who were with me saw the light, to be sure, but did not understand the voice of the One who was speaking to me. And I said, ‘What shall I do, Lord?’ And the Lord said to me, ‘Get up and go on into Damascus, and there you will be told of all that has been appointed for you to do.’ But since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me and came into Damascus.”(Acts 22:6-11)

"While so engaged as I was journeying to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, at midday, O King, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining all around me and those who were journeying with me. And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew dialect, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’ And I said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you; rescuing you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.’”(Acts 26:12-18)

From these scriptures, we see that Paul at that time was indeed, "and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions."(Galatians 1:14) Therefore, he persecuted the church. As he approached Damascus at noon, suddenly a light brighter than the sun flashed around him and his companions. They all fell to the ground, yet none of his companions saw the man who had appeared in the light or heard the voice that spoke to him. In truth, Paul also saw Jesus in the light, for Scripture says, "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ...and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also."(1 Corinthians 15:3-8) Because of the glory of that light, he could not see, but his companions, who were not similarly affected, took him by the hand and led him into Damascus.

This voice spoke in Hebrew, essentially declaring that this was Jesus, and that persecuting the church was persecuting Him—such persecution was like kicking against the goads, which is difficult! We will mention Ananias shortly, for Ananias will tell him what he must do—essentially, become an apostle to the Gentiles. Before Ananias arrived, he was unable to see, eat, or drink for three days. The Lord told him, "But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you; rescuing you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me."(Acts 26:16-18) In essence, Ananias was to tell him to become an apostle to the Gentiles.

## **2. The Lord instructs Ananias to baptize Saul and fill him with the Holy Spirit**

**"Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and the Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord." And the Lord said to him, "Get up and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying, and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him, so that he might regain his sight." But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he did to Your saints at Jerusalem; and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name." But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake." So Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he got up and was baptized; and he took food and was strengthened. ..." (Acts 9:10-19)**

**From these scriptures we can see that the Lord is quite humorous. In the vision, He allowed Ananias to see himself. He could have simply told him to go and tell Paul what to say, yet He added this amusing detail, drawing our attention to His humorous side. I recall when someone pointed this passage out to me, I couldn't perceive God's humor in these verses at the time. If I remember correctly, I later tried explaining it to at least four other people, and they were just like me initially—unable to see God's humor in this. I wonder if they ever came to see it later.**

**As we've discussed, the message he brought to Paul in prayer was essentially the same as what Paul heard in the blinding light. Therefore, Paul believed and willingly allowed this stranger to lay hands on him. This further confirmed his conviction that the man was sent by the Lord. Seeing the tangible proof that his sight was restored, Paul was baptized. Paul was filled with the Holy Spirit and certainly received spiritual baptism. As for water baptism, it should have been administered as well, for Peter said in these verses, "Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he?" And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay on for a few days." (Acts 10:47-48) As for which came first, the Scriptures do not explicitly state it, nor is it important. Paul had not eaten for three days, but after eating, he regained his strength.**

## **3. Saul testifies Jesus is the Christ by his Own Power and its outcome**

**"...Now for several days he was with the disciples who were at Damascus, and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God." All those hearing him continued to be amazed, and were saying, "Is this not he who in Jerusalem destroyed those who called on this name, and who had come here for the purpose of bringing them bound before the chief priests?" But Saul kept increasing in strength and**

**confounding the Jews who lived at Damascus by proving that this Jesus is the Christ. When many days had elapsed, the Jews plotted together to do away with him, but their plot became known to Saul. They were also watching the gates day and night so that they might put him to death; but his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a large basket."(Acts 9:19-25)**

**After seeing the bright light, Paul came to know that Jesus was the Christ. In Damascus, he proved this to be true through his own knowledge. The result was that the Jews sought to kill him, and he had no choice but to flee. It was only after receiving revelatory knowledge that he became useful to God. As he himself stated, "For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ."(Galatians 1:11-12)**

#### **4. Saul going to Jerusalem and then fleeing to Tarsus**

**"When he came to Jerusalem, he was trying to associate with the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took hold of him and brought him to the apostles and described to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had talked to him, and how at Damascus he had spoken out boldly in the name of Jesus. And he was with them, moving about freely in Jerusalem, speaking out boldly in the name of the Lord. And he was talking and arguing with the Hellenistic Jews; but they were attempting to put him to death. But when the brethren learned of it, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him away to Tarsus. So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase."(Acts 9:26-31)**

**It was reasonable for the disciples not to accept him at first, since he had persecuted the church. But Barnabas, the son of encouragement, welcomed Paul and explained his current situation before the apostles, enabling Paul to preach boldly in the name of the Lord. The people were willing to listen to him, showing they believed his words, "for he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. ..." (Acts 11:24) How could one filled with the Holy Spirit lie and call Satan his father? He spoke the truth. This is yet another example of "what God tells us through Bible is consistent. "**

**Finally, when the Jews sought to kill him, he fled to Tarsus, for he was "...born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated under Gamaliel, strictly according to the law of our fathers, being zealous for God just as you all are today. I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and putting both men and women into prisons."(Acts 22:3-4) He truly "...was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions."(Galatians 1:14) This zeal led him to persecute the church. No other person in the New Testament is recorded as persecuting the church to such an extent. His dramatic transformation after seeing the great light resulted in "...the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed**

peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase."(Acts 9:31)

## **5. Peter heals the paralytic Aeneas and raises Tabitha from the Dead**

**"Now as Peter was traveling through all those regions, he came down also to the saints who lived at Lydda. There he found a man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden eight years, for he was paralyzed. Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; get up and make your bed." Immediately he got up. And all who lived at Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord. Now in Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (which translated in Greek is called Dorcas); this woman was abounding with deeds of kindness and charity which she continually did. And it happened at that time that she fell sick and died; and when they had washed her body, they laid it in an upper room. Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, having heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him, imploring him, "Do not delay in coming to us." So Peter arose and went with them. When he arrived, they brought him into the upper room; and all the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing all the tunics and garments that Dorcas used to make while she was with them. But Peter sent them all out and knelt down and prayed, and turning to the body, he said, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up. And he gave her his hand and raised her up; and calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. It became known all over Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. And Peter stayed many days in Joppa with a tanner named Simon."(Acts 9:32-43)**

**The text details two miracles performed by Peter: healing the paralytic Aeneas and raising the disciple Tabitha from the dead. We won't elaborate further. Note that Peter performed these miracles through Christ—he was merely the instrument. Also noteworthy is that some people believed in the Lord because of this. Interestingly, Peter was also called Simon and happened to be staying at Simon's house. The Bible seemingly had no need to add this phrase. If we examine the word "tanner" (G1038), which appears only three times, we can understand this point. The inclusion of this phrase draws our attention to God's sense of humor, echoing the earlier account of Ananias seeing himself in a vision. I recall asking my son if he had noticed God's humor in Scripture. He hadn't seen the Ananias passage, but he pointed out the tanner verse. At that time, I wondered what was so funny about Simon staying at Simon's house. It wasn't until preparing this Bible study that I realized: if the Bible didn't intend to highlight God's humor, this sentence wouldn't be there at all. He was right.**