

# ACTS : Being Agents of Renewal

Acts 9:1-22 | Abel Mendez. | May 17, 2026

## Acts 9 : Being Agents of Renewal

### Who has been the most instrumental person(s) in your faith toward Christ?

Friend / Roommate? Spouse / Relative? Coworker / Neighbor? Seated Next To You?  
Among Many - John Campbell - Verne Nesbitt

### IMAGE : Today's Text is a Sonic Boom Event!

A Dramatic concussion of heaven breaking the atmosphere of earth!  
Paul's "Conversion" as our Bible Headers describe it was the 3rd time Heaven & Earth Meet in Acts

### IMAGE : The 3 Overlaps in Acts (Heaven / Earth)

**Pentecost - A New Temple - PEOPLE** filled with Glory (Act 2:1 | Ex 40:34 | 1 Kng 8:10-11)  
**Stephen - A New High Priest - JESUS** 'Standing' (Act 7:56 | Deu 18:6 | Zec 3:1 | Heb 10:11)  
**Paul - A New Nation** (Acts 9:15 - Proclaim to Gentiles | Gal 3:28 | 1 Pet 2:9 )

**VERSE : 1 Peter 2:9** But you are a chosen people, **a royal priesthood, a holy nation**, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

This is a New Government with a New King As Propheesied (Isaiah 9:6)  
These ("New") 3 Realities Revealed were misunderstood - that led to persecution of Jesus people.  
Viewed as THREAT both to Religious & Political Establishments.

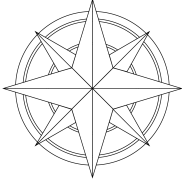
### IMAGE : Paul Persecutor to Preacher

1. This Text Reveals HOW God renews and WHO God Uses
2. This is not us figuring our OUR PURPOSE for God...
3. Rather this reveals how GOD FULFILLS HIS PURPOSE for us!

### IMAGE : Todays Focus - What BEING and Agent of God Entails

- **Recruitment** : *Jesus' Initiation through Conviction.*
- **Responding** : *Our Partnership in Obedience.*
- **Refinement** : *Faith in the Process of Preparation*

It is about having **LIFE WITH GOD** posture rather than **LIFE FOR GOD** Posture (Sky Jethani, *With : Reimagining the Way You Relate to God.*)



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## 1. Recruitment : *Jesus' Initiation to Renewal*

### SLIDE : What Saul's "Conversion" IS NOT

Not - Saul abandoning a religion (Judaism) for another (Christianity)

Not - Saul striving to get his life together / Try to be the best he could be (Phil 3:6 "Blameless..")

### SLIDE : So What was this "Conversion?"

- "A Radical Redefining of Understanding (Israel, Messiah, God's Purpose)
- Saul's Invitation to Being Born Again

### SLIDE : John 3:3 "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.

There is NOTHING we did to birth ourselves in the first place, and there is NOTHING we can do to REBIRTH ourselves - It is a miracle of God HE DOES when we respond!

*Question: Have You been born again??*

Prayer Moment?

**What Born-Again looked like for Saul... His BC Days!!!**

### SLIDE : Paul the Zealot (Read 1:1-2)

**Acts 9:1** Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples.

**SLIDE : Galatians 1:13,14** You have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, **how intensely I persecuted the church** of God and tried to destroy it... extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers..

**SLIDE: Zealous (zēlōtēs)** one burning with zeal; a zealot; as jealous of any rival, sternly vindicating control - From time of Maccabees a class of men who rigorously adhered to mosaic law, even resorting to violence after example of Phinehas (Numbers 25:11)

*2 Major Rabbinic Schools would have likely influence Saul*

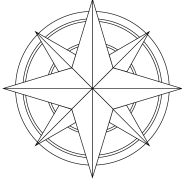
- **Hillel (Beit Hillel) - A Moderate** - Was Grandfather of **Gamaliel - Lenient** (Ac 5:34-39, 22:3)
- **Shammai (Beit Shammai) - Radical** - Say your prayers, sharpen your swords and be ready.

*In their Warped thinking : Violence was Biblical!!!*

- This WARPED WORLDVIEW justified Saul's letters from the synagogue to imprison Disciples of Jesus!

*Even AFTER approving of Stephen's Death & Letters of Persecution...*

**(READ 1:3-4)**



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## JESUS INITIATES : THE TRUTH WITH LOVE!

**Acts 9:4** “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?”

- Jesus calls it what it is : Persecution and Reveals who its is against... JESUS!!!

### **Q: What does Jesus’ Recruiting look like?**

- A : Conviction : in the Bible is primarily the work of the Holy Spirit showing a person the reality of their sin, their need for God, and the truth of Christ. (Ro 2:4 - Jn 14:6)
- *An Example of Jesus LEADING with Compassion - NOT at Expense of Truth!*

**QUOTE** : “Conversion is not the smooth, easy-going process some men seem to think... It is wounding work.” — J. C. Ryle

## SLIDE : CONVICTION ACCORDING TO SAUL (Before Agrippa)

- **Acts 26:13** ... I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads!
- The Goad is a prodding tool - Perhaps Saul felt it his entire life!

**HAVE YOU EVERY QUESTIONED YOUR CONVERSION? PERHAPS ITS NOT THAT DRAMATIC!!!** (Jefferson 6th Grader)

**SLIDE**: “I know very well when, but hardly how, the final step was taken. I was driven to Whipsnade one sunny morning. When we set out I did not believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and when we reached the zoo I did.” (CS LEWIS - Surprised by Joy)

**EVERY RENEWAL STORY IS A MIRACLE!!! (Read 9:5-6)**

Read : **Acts 9:6** Get up and go... you will be told what you must do.

## Jesus is LORD of Trajectories : Get up and Go (Damascus)

- Jesus did not tell Paul to go back to where he came from...
- **GO YOUR WAY... AND BE ATTENTIVE TO MY INSTRUCTIONS**

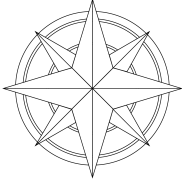
## God is Sovereign - What this ALL MEANS

- *(Whatever Our Trajectories - School, Career, Season of Life, Whether we Initiated it without Christ - or With - God Sovereignly will use for HIS GLORY - May we get up and go ATTENTIVE to His word / spirit!)*

**SONG** : Ain’t no mountain high enough, Ain’t no valley low enough, Ain’t no river wide enough to keep me from gettin’ to you!” (Marvin Gay & Tammi Terrel)

**NO MATTER WHERE YOU ARE : JESUS IS RECRUITING!**

**2. Response** : Obedient Partnership



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**(Read 9:7-10)**

- **Acts 9:10** In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, “Ananias!” **“Yes, Lord,” he answered.**
- Jesus Recruits (Conviction) We Respond (Obedience)

**Quote : ‘The Creator works in a thousand ways, but one central way is through people - people who think, who pray, who make difficult decisions, who work hard, especially in prayer.’ - (Paul: A Biography, N.T. Wright)**

**(Read 9:11-14)**

**Ananias is SO RELATABLE in this “MESSY” Conversation...**

- Ananias is NOT STOIC, He has Fear, He Questions, Wrestles, His Obedience is Reluctant at first!!!
- Church is FULL of messy examples of IMPERFECT people doing the work of the LORD!
- Somehow GOD uses it all for His Glory!
- Like a Child we give our MESSY lives and HE CREATES HIS MASTERPIECE!

**IMAGES : RUTHER OOSTERMAN (DAUGHTER) - ISLA NEEL**

*The Point : Jesus’ Invitation is to CO-LABOR WITH HIM as Instruments!*

**(Read 9:15-16)**

**SLIDE : Humans are His Instruments...**

- **Acts 9:15** Go! This man is my **chosen Instrument**
- **Romans 6:13 ... offer yourselves to God** as those who have been brought from death to life; and **offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness.**

**(Read Acts 9:17-19)**

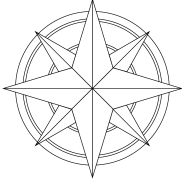
**SLIDE : His Church is His Hands & Feet!**

- **Acts 9:17** Then **Ananias went** to the house and entered it. **Placing his hands on Saul**, he said, “**Brother Saul**, the Lord—**Jesus**, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—**has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.**”

**SLIDE 1 : MEN - LETS BE THE HANDS & FEET OF JESUS THIS WEEK!**

- Event Details

**SLIDE 2 : LURE YOU WITH TACOS!**



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## 3. Refinement : Faith in the Process of Preparation

- **Acts 19:20** At once **(Saul) began to preach in the synagogues** that Jesus is the Son of God.
- **Acts 19:22** Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by **proving that Jesus is the Messiah!**

### IMAGE : PAUL WITH A MAP & BULLET POINTS

- Was the Author of 13 Best Selling Letters (30% of the New Testament!)
- A Church Planter responsible for 20 church plants!
- Who traveled an estimated 10,000 miles by foot and sail!
- Who spoke in over 5 Modern-Day Nation States
- Whose public speaking includes chores, marketplaces, synagogues and courts!
- A Man of Great Success!!!

### NO ACTUALLY : Somewhere between Acts 9:23 - 26

**Paul actually disappears into the Wilderness for 3 years!!!**

**MAP 1** : Galatians 1:17 I did not go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went to Arabia. Later I returned to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem...

*Have you ever felt dry? Ever found yourself in a wilderness???*

- You're in good company, with people like Moses, David, John the Baptist & Jesus!!!

**Just because you are in the wilderness does not mean you are doing something wrong! - Ryan Pfeiffer**

*Being an Agent of Renewal INCLUDES REFINEMENT*

- Being Renewed is NOT all about the Hype... Its ultimately about being made more like JESUS!!!

**QUOTE** : "Hardships often prepare ordinary people for an extraordinary destiny." CS Lewis

- The Wilderness' of life is God's tool to prepare us for what is next!

### MAP 2: SO Then after 3 years he was all good? NO... REJECTION

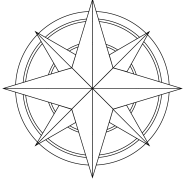
- **Acts 9:29-30** (Saul) talked and debated with Hellenistic Jews, but they tried to kill him. When the believers learned of this they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus

**Map 3 : Altogether Paul would spend 10 Years in Tarsus before Barnabas would check up on him and bring him back to Jerusalem!!!**

- **Galatians 1:21** Then I returned to Syria and Cilicia (Tarsus)... **2:1**Then after 14 years, I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. (Acts 11:25,29-30)

*What was Paul doing in Tarsus? Tent Making in Obscurity...*

- Tarsus was a Major Trade Route City
- For 10 Years He would be Communicating and Relating His story



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- EVERY NATION, EVERY RELIGION, EVERY CULTURE on earth Traveling through Tarsus!
- Roman Officials, Jewish Travelers, Eastern Astrologers and Mystics, Greek Stoics, Epicurean Philosophers

*Are you in a wilderness? Do you feel like you have been put on the shelf? As long as you have breath god has HIS PURPOSE in mind for you!*

- **Phil 1:6** be confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion!

*As a Reminder : It is about having **LIFE WITH GOD** posture rather than **LIFE FOR GOD** Posture (Sky Jethani, With : Reimagining the Way You Relate to God.)*

## **Conclusion : Where are You in the Process?**

We Must Remain TEACHABLE to our Lord...

## **Is Jesus Recruiting You To Him or BACK to Him? (Conviction)**

**What does your Response Look Like? (Obedience)**

**In What ways is He Refining You? (Wilderness)**

## **What it might look like to be an Agent of Renewal in our Contexts.**

- **As Parent** : Discipleship whether young, adult or Old... Our kids will always need us!
- **As Business Leader** : Integrity in the Board Room a Blessing to your Employees or Boss!
- **As Students** : Participating on Campus to partner to reach other peers.
- **As Elderly** : Saying YES Lord to every opportunity to love, Mentor, Encourage the Next Generation!

**QUOTE : Being an Agent of Renewal is about living our our lives with a sense of wonder, awe and discovery! (God what doe you have for me today!?)**

- Where might God send me? Where might God lead me? Where might I walk with Jesus and experience His Miracle of Renewal in the life of another!

**Here I am Lord Send me!!! (Men - See You Tuesday!)**

Final Verse : **1 Tim 1:13** Even though I was once a blasphemer and persecutor and a violent man, **I was shown mercy... the Grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus...**