

24a ACTS

Let's begin our study of the Word of God this evening in the usual fashion. We realize that it is important to make sure that God can do something useful with our time. We don't really have, not really, we don't at all have the ability to understand God's Word except with the ability that God gives us through His Spirit.

And His Spirit has a hard time ministering to us when we regard sin in our hearts. If we've fouled up during the day and during the week and have not brought that before God and allowed Him to cleanse us and enable us to benefit from what His Spirit has for us, this is a good time to do so. So we go before God.

We acknowledge His grace. He's faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us when we sin. And as a result, we are then able to receive things that are a part of God's plan and purpose.

So let's go to the Lord in prayer. Father, thank You, as always, for the wonderful way that You have provided for us and preserved us and protected us. We have assembled in freedom.

We don't have any fear of someone breaking in, persecuting us, or arresting us. And that is not true in many parts of the world. We thank You that we have this opportunity and we pray that You will bless it.

As we study Your Word, we pray that the Holy Spirit will find our hearts ready and receptive and be able to teach us so that these truths will be real to us and make a difference in the way we live in the days ahead. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Well, we pick up this story in the book of Acts, Luke Volume 2, at the beginning of chapter 9. We've covered eight full chapters now. And as I mentioned last time, we're at a turning point. The first eight chapters have really been centered in Jerusalem, looking primarily at Peter and John and their preaching in Solomon's Porch and the effect that it has had in Jerusalem and Judea.

And we saw in the last chapter, beginning with Philip, how it is spreading to Samaria and to the coast. We had our air map last time of the Mediterranean Sea and we saw Philip go down toward Gaza, which is the far southwestern corner of Israel, on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, on the way to Egypt. He headed down in that direction.

Met this Ethiopian gentleman who is a great, high potentate, the treasurer for Queen Candace of the Ethiopians. He's already been to Jerusalem, he's been worshiping, and he's on his way out of the country. And we're going to see this same kind of thing happen again in our study tonight, where you would think, well, wouldn't it be more efficient if the Ethiopian man has been in Jerusalem? You've got 11 apostles floating

around Jerusalem.

Why not just run the Ethiopian into the Jerusalem church and say, Hi there, my name is the Ethiopian eunuch, and I just bought me an Isaiah scroll, and I was reading chapter 53, and I heard there was a man named Peter or John preaching on Solomon's Porch, and I think one of you gentlemen can help me figure this out. Instead, he comes to Jerusalem, buys his scroll, worships, gets in his chariot, and is nearly out of the country, and God says, Hey Philip, head down the road to Gaza. Philip says, Aye, aye, sir, and off he goes.

He has no idea what's going to take place, but as he's in this desert area, this deserted place, he sees this palanquin, there's a good word for you, try to work that into your conversation, palanquin, going along, he's probably got some lackeys or servants of some sort bearing him along. And Philip pulls up alongside, he's no doubt using his two feet for transportation, and he comes peddling up alongside and looks over, and he hears the man puzzling over this Isaiah scroll. And he says, Do you understand what you're reading? And the guy says, No, I don't.

Why don't you hop up in here and explain it to me? And we saw everything that happened as a result. Then the spirit catches Philip away, but just a little ways. Doesn't take him clear from one country to another like he did Ezekiel, or bury him up into heaven or anything, he just moves him over the ridge and out of the sight of the Ethiopian.

And the Ethiopian goes on his way rejoicing. Where did Philip go? This pertains to what we're going to look at tonight. He went first to a town called Azotus, which is just, you could almost throw a rock from where he baptized the eunuch to Azotus, it's just a very small distance.

And then from there, he went where? He went on up the coast north to Caesarea, which was formerly called Straton's Towers. And this is not the Caesarea Philippi that you learn about when you study the journeys of the Apostle Paul. This is Caesarea Sebaste, which is right there on the coast.

All of this is formerly Philistine territory. Do you remember what the old name of Azotus was? What was Azotus in earlier days? Ashdod. Ashdod of the rats and tumors fame.

Ashdod of Philistine five great cities fame. Ashdod. So Caesarea is going to come up here again shortly if we get to it, and I don't have too long of an introduction.

So, now, we asked ourselves the question at the end last time, if God sent an angel to Philip and said, hey Philip, go talk to this Ethiopian eunuch, why didn't God just send the angel to the eunuch? Save Philip a trip. Philip is a deacon, he's up there dishing out food and supplies and helping widows and orphans make arrangements up there in

Jerusalem. He's one of the seven, along with Stephen.

Of course, they're short a deacon now because Stephen got stoned, and now Philip has been sent off on a mission. So now they're down to five deacons in Jerusalem, the way I count them, because Philip didn't go back. He went to Caesarea and took up residence.

We saw that in Acts 21, I think. So, now, why didn't God just send the angel to the man in the litter, being born along the road? He sent Philip. Well, we decided we'd have to kind of put that on hold and look at some other examples.

Well, we're going to get another example tonight. So, let's pick up now in Acts chapter 9. Acts chapter 9. I'm going to read this out of my good, old-fashioned, original King James Version. That's what I'm using tonight.

So, if you've got the new King James, it'll look pretty close, but it's going to have a few V's and Vow's in it. I'm sure you'll be able to follow along. It says, Now, what does this mean? Saul, who is getting all of the Christians he can.

He is a Jew. He thinks you ought to stick with the Old Testament and doesn't want to hear any of this Christ on the cross business. It's corrupting Judaism.

It's wrecking synagogue worship. He thinks it's blasphemy. He thinks God is all against it.

So, he goes to the council. He goes to the Sanhedrin. This is the 70.

This is the bunch that decided to arrest and beat Peter and John and so on. He goes to them and he says, Hey, I have heard through my network of spies that a bunch of these followers of this way, these Christ believers, have left town and gone north and east up to Damascus. Now, Damascus is still a town today, isn't it? What country is it in? It's in Syria, right? I had to do some shooting on Syrians 20 years ago when I was in Lebanon and Lebanese and the Syrians were shooting at one another and blowing one another up.

When I came back in between trips over there and I had a friend of mine, a roommate of mine, in the car and we stopped at a gas station on the way to visit my parents in Oklahoma and there was a Middle Eastern man running the register. You know how you walk up, you pump your own gas, go up to the little glass window? And my friend, being a Marine and having no tact whatsoever, said, You sound Middle Eastern. What country are you from? He said, Boy, I'm from Syria.

And my friend said, Oh, well, this fellow here has just been over there blowing up your countrymen. He said, Oh, I'm not one of them. I'm glad to be an American.

You know, America, I love America. And I felt kind of sorry for him. But Syria, Damascus, this is where these Jews have fled because they're beyond the reach of the temple police

and the security forces that run rampant throughout Jerusalem and the surrounding environs.

So these people have had to pick up and relocate. So Saul says, I can go get them. If you'll give me some letters to the synagogue rulers in Damascus.

Now, what does this tell us? There are Jewish communities in Damascus, just like there are elsewhere. Remember we talked about those Greekified Jews that live in Asia Minor and up around in Greece and all up through the region that were scattered in these wars that took place when the Greeks came in and invaded Israel and then the Romans came in and kicked out the Greeks and they invaded and that's why you have Herod in charge. So a lot of Jews scattered, lost all their property and they just went elsewhere to make a living.

So there are synagogues in Damascus. And Saul has the idea that these Christians have fled Jerusalem, gone up the road to Damascus and have gotten in and are probably corrupting people that are in the synagogues up there. He says, I'm going to go get them, bind them, tie them up and bring them back here for trial and arrest and possible execution.

Well, the council thinks this is a great idea. This young ball of fire Saul, he's a hard charger. Let's just turn him loose on all of these malcontents that have gone to Damascus.

So they give him the letters. That's what this is talking about. So he could bring them down into Jerusalem.

So he gets his entourage. He's probably got some guards, some of the temple security force or something. He's been detailed to go with him to help bring the prisoners back.

So he's got a little convoy there, a little group. And they're going down the road. And it says in verse 3, as he journeyed, he came near Damascus.

So realize again, when this takes place, he's not just outside Jerusalem. He's not just down the road at Jericho or right at the Jordan River. He is almost to Damascus.

You can probably see the city smoke rising in the distance. He came near Damascus. Suddenly there shone round about him a light from heaven, and he fell to the earth and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? He said, Who are you, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom you persecute.

It is hard for you to kick against the goads. The original King James says, kick against the pricks, the thorns, the sharp cactus thorns. It is hard for you to kick against the goads.

And he, Saul, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what will you have me to do? The

Lord said to him, Get up, go into the city, and it will be told you what you must do. And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a noise, but seeing no man. Now, if your Bible says voice, the same word in Greek means noise and voice.

And they heard a noise, but they did not see a man. They may have even heard a voice, but they didn't understand the words. Verse 8 says, Saul arose from the earth, and when he opened his eyes, he couldn't see anyone.

They led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. So he stands up blind. Can't see anything.

And he was three days without sight, and he didn't eat, and he didn't drink. Three days, no sight. Three days, count them, no sight.

Just thought I'd point that out. Now, we'll get to verse 10 and following later, but there's a few things we want to look at here. You think, okay, fine, I have heard this story 25 times.

If I've heard it once, I've heard it 25 times. Saul on the Damascus road, struck down. Why are you persecuting me? It's hard for you to kick against the cactus thorns here.

What do you have me do? Go to the town. Everybody knows this story, right? Well, I want to look particularly at verse 4. When he fell to the earth, he heard a voice saying to him, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? There is not a wasted word in that sentence. Every single word counts.

Why didn't he just say, why are you persecuting me? There's only one man that is hearing the words, but he says Saul, and he says Saul twice. Now, the last time this particular speaker said somebody's name twice, that I know of, was from the cross. When he said, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Now you have Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? This doubling of the name is emphatic.

Before the cross, Jesus did this. Do you remember whose name he repeated twice? We saw it in Luke. It was Martha.

Martha, Martha. I'll let you look that up for homework. But the point, why is the name doubled? Go back to the Old Testament.

You'll see this taking place where Samuel is called in the middle of the night, and his name is called more than once. This is an attention-getting device. It is emphatic.

There is no doubt in the person's mind who is being addressed. Sometimes, you know, you're talking with a child, you're working with a child, and you say their name, and they look at you like, who, me? Are you talking to me? Or I say, can you pick up that pencil on the floor? You mean this one? There's one floor, one pencil, why are you asking me this

question? When you repeat someone's name, you forestall any such questions because when you say, Sam, Sam, I don't have to ask a question. I don't say, you talking to me? The question is answered before it's asked.

It's emphatic. It draws his complete and total attention. Now, you notice the first time he speaks, he says, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? Each one of those words is significant.

Let's take a look first at the word persecute. Up to this point, do you think that Saul, in chasing down these blasphemers as he views them, do you think he thought he was persecuting anyone? Would he have called it persecution? Did he go to the council and say, could you give me some letters of persecution I can take to Damascus? He thought this was rightful search and seizure to go and arrest people who were breaking God's law. That's how he viewed it.

So when Jesus speaks and says, why are you persecuting me? And you notice he doesn't get an argument. It's not like Malachi where he says, in what way am I persecuting you? And we'll see more about that in a moment. But Jesus says, what you are doing is persecution.

Why are you persecuting me? And by the way, that question does not get an answer, does it? Does Saul answer this question? Well, Lord, it's... Now there are other people that get asked questions. Cain gets asked, why has your countenance fallen? Jeremiah gets asked, why are you depressed? Lord, only I am left. Remember that? Many, many times God will ask a question and he'll get an answer.

And he has to keep asking and they have to keep answering. Here, Saul doesn't give an answer because he and the Lord both know. And that's what comes in the next statement.

It is hard for you to kick against the goats. There has been internal turbulence already. The Holy Spirit has already been working on Saul.

And he continues. Now, you think about games of kicking. Soccer is a game of kicking, right? They do not make a soccer ball with pointed steel spikes all over it, do they? This would make it a whole different kind of a game.

Football don't have little pointy spikes on them. People have rattlesnake fests and all different kinds of things out in the desert, but they don't say, let's go have a cactus kicking contest. Let's see how far someone can kick a prickly pear here.

We don't do that. Why? It hurts. And if you kick something and you get poked in the foot, you pretty well stop kicking.

Well, Saul has continued to kick. What does the kicking represent? It's this persecution.

He's kicking these people around.

Kicking them into prison. Kicking them in front of the authorities. And what Jesus says here is, you have been getting some feedback from this that is causing you pain and you continue to do it.

It's been difficult. I've been giving you some signs that this is not the right thing and you just keep on kicking. You've got a bloody foot and you're still kicking.

He says, why are you persecuting me? Now, at this point, Saul does not even know who is speaking. And if your Bible is properly punctuated, the first Lord there should be a small L. This is like Sir. The word Lord, kurios, in Greek and in the parlance of the day was just a term of respect like Señor in Spanish.

Or Sir. A few hundred years ago, Master, which became Mister, was a common form of address. And if you're a serf and you've got the landed gentry going by, you would say Master, not because you're a slave and he's the master, but it was a form of respect.

And it became Mister. And it came down in our titles. You still have to say Mister, Mrs. or Ms. something on an address block because where does that come from? Very few of us are masters of anything.

But Mister is still a title of respect. Well, kurios was the same thing back then. So he's basically saying, Sir, who are you? But Jesus says, the speaker says, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? So there's three different issues there.

Why are you doing this? Goes right to the heart of his motivation. Why has he decided he needs to go to Damascus? He's not content with all the ones he was able to round up in Jerusalem? Has this become a crusade? Is he getting way too much pleasure out of persecuting these people? Secondly, it is persecution. It's not legitimate.

It's not well founded. And thirdly, Jesus says, you're doing it to me. And Saul at this point doesn't know yet that it's Jesus that's speaking.

He has an idea that there's something abnormal going on because he's on his face. There's a bright light and he's blind. He gets this voice.

And I think he already has a fairly good idea of who's speaking. But he asks the question anyway. So he says, Who are you, Sir? Who are you, kurios? And that's small L. And the Lord said, that's capital L, I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.

This is twice now that he is told what you're doing is persecution and it is persecuting me, Jesus. Now, this fits with what we saw back in Luke, doesn't it? He said, if you have done it to the least of these, my brethren, you have done it unto me. And that goes for blessing.

He says you can give a cup of water to someone and if you do it in my name, it is as though you have done it for me. As a point of application, sometimes people need help. Several of us were helping people earlier this week.

And you can think, boy, this is messing up my schedule or I can think of things I might rather be doing. But look at it this way. Let's say the Lord Jesus had a need.

And he came up and said, Hey, I've got some stuff here I need to move from point A to point B or I've got something going on here. If the Lord Jesus came up and said, Could you do this? How quick would we be? Here's the Lord of glory. He died on the cross for us.

He gave us a whole new life and a future and eternity apart from the lake of fire. And he says, Could you help me with this small task? How willing would we be? I mean, we would be on that right away. Jesus said, you know what? The least of my people, the least, they may have nothing.

Now, I'm not talking about specific cases here. I'm saying regardless. It could be somebody wonderful.

It could be somebody you hardly know. You may have no idea of where they stand in the great scheme of things. Jesus said, Even if they're the very least of my brethren, if you do something for them, it is as though you have done it for me.

How diligent are we? How willing are we? How positive and cheerful are we to do something that may inconvenience us? What is the measure of love? What is the ultimate standard? If you peg the meter on love, what do you do? What does the Scripture say? Greater love hath no man than this. Than what? That a man lay down his life. Even the secular world recognizes this.

We have many Medal of Honor winners who gave their lives for others. Self-sacrificial. Went back to pull their wounded buddy off of the battlefield.

Jumped on a grenade to save a roomful of their squad mates. Or whatever. Self-sacrifice.

Everyone recognizes this. That being self-sacrificial is the great measure of love. Well, how much less are we called to? To go a little bit out of our way? To invest some time or some effort in a thing? Jesus says here, Saul, you're persecuting these people.

You're persecuting Me. You notice, in movies and stories and things, when people think in terms of justice, especially in Twilight Zone and The Outer Limits and some of these supernatural shows, somebody persecutes somebody and they die. Well, then that person comes back and gets even.

They start appearing and the person runs off the road and crashes into a tree or

whatever. The person comes back and wreaks justice. But in the Bible, it's far more powerful.

You and I belong to the Lord Jesus Christ. And as Mr. T says, I pity the poor fool that messes with you or that messes with me. Because Jesus said, if you do it to the least of ease, my brethren, you have done it unto Me.

We do not have to even the score. We do not have to balance the scale. We don't have to impress on someone that they had better not mess with us in the future.

People who were persecuted, people who were run out of town and sent other places, people who were locked up and possibly even executed, the Lord Jesus went to their persecutor and He said, you are persecuting Me. And even though this man becomes a great apostle, he never forgot. We will see time and again where he says, when it comes to sinners, I am the chief because I persecuted the church of God.

And it was an affliction. It was a cross and a burden that Paul carried the rest of his life, even as a great apostle, because he realized what he had done to the Lord Jesus in persecuting these people. So, everything about this sentence has meaning.

Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? Now, you think about us. We have believers in our periphery, don't we? We have people that we know. We have family members.

We have people that we come in contact with who belong to the family of God, who belong to Christ. Listen to me carefully. The attitudes that we have, the things that we say, the deeds that we perpetrate to those people, the Lord Jesus Christ is standing there looking you and me in the eye and saying, Sam, Sam, why are you persecuting me? Why are you treating me this way? What we do to fellow believers, we do to the Lord Jesus.

That's how He looks at it. And it is a serious, serious thing. So, Saul fell to the earth.

He hears these words. And he says, Who are you, Lord? Who are you, Sir? The Lord said, I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goats.

This is not the first time this issue has come up. You know already that what you're doing, you've been getting some painful feedback on this. Why didn't you stop? You could interpret this a little bit.

Why are you still persecuting me after I have put the thorns in your foot every time you kick? Just how hard-headed are you? What am I going to have to do to you besides striking you blind on this road to get you to re-evaluate your decisions and your actions here? Now look at him in verse 6. He, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, and this is Lord with a capital L, what would you have me to do? Now this is the correct response. This is the right answer. If you get confronted with the fact that you're doing something amiss, well, what should I be doing instead? This is the right response.

If you ever want to get up off the road, if you ever want to have your sight restored, you've got to get the point. You've got to have the change of mind. So, what would you have me do? The Lord said to him, get up, go on into the city, and you'll be told what you are to do.

So, you notice that his first instruction is just a very small thing. Now, you think about this. We've been going along, doing whatever we're doing, and we suddenly hear from the Word of God.

We look at the Word of God and the Word of God says, hey, you, I'm talking to you. God has given you a life to live for a reason. You've been going your own way and you've been getting feedback.

You've been getting some painful feedback here. So, wake up. Our first response ought to be, okay, what should I be doing? And you'll notice, God doesn't say, well, just take a seat here on a rock.

I'm going to give you 15 paragraphs of what you're going to be doing. Let me give you a crash course in being an apostle and making three missionary journeys and being imprisoned and shipwrecked and bit by snakes and beaten three times, 39 lashes, and going to Jerusalem, shaving your head. Jesus doesn't give him all that.

The Lord is so merciful to us. He gives him one simple test. He says, look, get up and go into town.

I'll give you more information later. Let's just see if you can start with a small first step. And isn't that a great thing that God does? God knows that we're not instantly going to turn into some great super saint.

We have to start with small steps. What is the small step? He says, let me just give you a little two-part instruction here and let's measure your response to that. Get up off your face.

Go on into town. I'll tell you more later. This man responds.

You know there are people who would not do that? Who would say, no. If you've got the power to strike me blind, if I try to continue, I don't know what you might do to me. I'm not moving until I can see again.

I'm bitter. I'm resentful. You struck me blind.

What kind of a God are you striking me blind? Catching me by surprise. Why didn't you just sit down? Why couldn't you be the God of my imagination? Why couldn't you sit me down on a rock and be the gentle Jesus and lead me through a field of daisies and set a child on your knee and show me through an example of love? You knock me down with a

bolt of thunder. You make this big noise.

You strike me blind. And now you're telling me there are people who would have this response. It's a rebellious response.

It's an unwilling, an unteachable response. There's a lot of us that are this way. And I promise you, the unteachable are going to get an even bigger thunderbolt and an even worse confrontation with God down the road.

This man at least has the good sense to say, even though I've been persecuting this, even though I've built my reputation on stamping out this way, I think this is the Lord Jesus. I believe I'll do what He says. This is the choice that you and I make.

We made it when we got saved, and we make it every single day. God has spoken to us out of His Word and He said, look, use your time, use your life for my glory instead of your own satisfaction. I will bless you.

I will knock your happiness factor out of the park if you will just put me first. And we have to do that on faith. The world says, no, no, we've got a better way.

We've got a better road to happiness. We make a decision. We have all had this confrontation.

What is our response? How do we choose? Look at this man. Kind of like the Ethiopian eunuch. He hears the Word and he says, hey, makes sense to me.

Let's do it. So, the men who journeyed didn't hear this voice. They are not receptive.

They are not going to be changed. They are ready to go arrest the Christians. Saul arose from the earth.

He opens his eyes in verse 8. He couldn't see anything. They led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight and he didn't eat and he didn't drink.

You know what not eating and not drinking means to a Jew? It's fasting. It is communion with God. He says, you know what? I'm too busy praying.

I'm too busy trying to cycle my Scriptures through my mind. I'm not going to take time to eat. I'm not even going to set aside time.

I'm not even going to get a drink. I'm just going to sit here and do nothing but think about God's Word and try to commune with God, have fellowship with God, make sure that He can speak to me through His Word. Saul says, this is the biggest thing that's ever happened to me.

I've got to figure it out. I know a lot of Scripture. I need to think it through.

He says, don't bring me any food. Don't bother me with a glass of water. I'm thinking.

That's what a fast was supposed to be. You dedicate the time. You don't even meet your own bodily needs.

You try to figure out what God is up to. What is God saying? What do I need to be doing by way of response? This is a wonderful response to have. Three days.

There are a lot of twos and threes that we're going to be seeing here. Three, as I've said before, is one of the numbers of perfection in the Bible. You have the number three.

You have the number seven. I've started this and not finished the thought several times, so let me be sure I finish it right here. The number three is the number of perfection in the sense of what is divine.

You have three members of the Trinity. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. You have the cherubim saying holy, holy, holy three times.

You have the Lord Jesus Christ in the heart of the earth three days and three nights because it is the fulfillment of God's divine plan for salvation. Many of the threes I could give you. The three parts of the tabernacle.

But I don't have time because I never do finish this thought and I'm going to finish it right now. Four is the number of earthly things. Four is the number of what happens on earth.

And when it's doubled, you get eight. Young boys were circumcised on the eighth day. When you add the number four, which is the number of earthly things, to the number three, which is the number of divine perfection, you get the number seven, which is the number of completeness or perfection in God's interaction from heaven with earthly things.

This is why you have the seven days, six days of creation and the day of rest. You have the 7,000 year plan of human history. This is God's working in history.

It is perfect when you get to the seven. There's a lot of other things I could say about that, but here we have three days because this is a major turning point in God's plan. The three days and three nights of Jesus in the heart of the earth was a major turning point, a major change in dispensation, and Paul is living through that dispensational change.

He's going to talk about this in Romans 7 when he says, I was alive once apart from the law, but when the law came, sin revived and I died. He, as an individual, sort of symbolizes and sums up the Old Testament age. He starts out being in the law, steeped in it as a Pharisee, Hebrew to Hebrews.

The Lord Jesus appears and there is this three-day span of time where Paul has to think about what has just happened and make a decision about it and he'll get more information. This is what happened with Israel. The three days and three nights of the crucifixion, the death, burial, and resurrection.

And then they've got new information that comes through the apostles, the beginning of the church age. So there is a parallel here. Paul, as an individual, sort of symbolizes what happens to Israel as a nation.

That's why you have the three days. Well, what does this all mean to us? Why do we care? This is why. Each of us has been confronted.

Now, we didn't get struck down. We didn't hear a voice from heaven. And if you do, go back and check what you've been eating because God doesn't do this anymore.

But we have an equally important confrontation. God the Holy Spirit comes to every single one of us and He says, you know what? There is a God. He is righteous.

He has a standard of righteousness and none of us meet it. And because of that, we are bound for the lake of fire. There is only one way that you can be reconciled to God and that's through the work of Christ.

God looked down and He says, you know, there's a sense in which you couldn't help this. You were conceived in iniquity. You were born in sin.

You were already corrupt and you were hell bound from the point of your birth. Because you didn't have a say, you weren't Adam in the garden saying, yes I will or no I won't eat the fruit. I'm going to go ahead and send my son and die on the cross and I'm going to pay for all of your sins in the same way that you didn't ask to be a sinner.

You're not going to have to ask to get the payment for your sins made. Now, this is something a lot of people don't understand but I'm going to tell you now in just one and a half minutes. All of our sins are paid for.

Nobody goes to hell for sins. The Lord Jesus Christ paid the price for every single sin. Hitler, Mussolini, Saddam, Gaddafi, Ayatollah, Idi Amin, you name it.

Think of the worst people in history. The Lord Jesus Christ has already paid for every single one of their sins. So, you say, alright, if everybody's sins are paid for, everybody's going to heaven, right? Wrong.

There is a lot more. Think about OJ Simpson. You can commit a crime and you can be declared not guilty but it doesn't mean that there are not other consequences of having been involved in a crime, right? Escaping the judicial penalty doesn't mean that everything is fine again.

And the fact that our judicial penalty has been paid, this is one of about seven different things that Jesus did to reconcile us to God. And it's the first one. And it's free, no charge.

It's like a down payment. It's an earnest, it's a good faith expression. God says, you know what? Human race, God still loves the world, gives His only begotten Son.

Everybody's sins are paid for and if you trust in Him and claim Him as your Savior, I'll do the other six things for you also. And that's all it takes. We have been confronted with that.

But if we accept that and if Christ is our Savior, He now stands before us and says, why are you doing what you're doing? Why are you living the way you're living? If you're not living for God, why not? Why are you persecuting me? Why are you persecuting my people? Why are you not living in the light of your deliverance? I've done the most for you that anyone could ever do. There's no greater love than laying down one's life for another. That's what Christ did for us.

Do we not care? Are we not interested in living our life? It's not a big sacrifice. We're not asked to die on His behalf. All we have to do is put Him first as Christians.

That's what we're asked to do. This is what Saul is being confronted with here. Well, let's pause and take our break.

When we come back, we're going to pick up here in verse 9 and see what happened after these three days.