**Acts 9 – A New Creature in Christ – Conversion**

 **The Jerusalem leader’s lost opportunity to hear the gospel**

Acts 7: 54 – 60 - When they heard these things they were cut to the quick, and they gnashed their teeth at him…they cried with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord, they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul…

And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. Then he knelt down and cried with a loud voice, Lord, do not charge them with this sin. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

1. The Lord Jesus told of the destruction of Jerusalem

 Matt. 24: 1-2 – then Jesus went out and departed from the Temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said, do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

 Matt. 23: 37 – 39 – O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate! For I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!

1. Rome destroyed most of Jerusalem in 70AD

**Saul the persecutor of the church**

Acts 8:1 – Saul was consenting to his death.

Acts 8:3 – Saul began ravaging the church, entering house after house, and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison.

Acts 9:1 – Now Saul still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord went to the high priest.

**Saul meets the Lord Jesus Christ**

Acts 9:4 – he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?

Acts 9:5 – and he said who are you Lord? Then the Lord said, I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads.

Acts 9:6 – So he trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what do you want me to do? Then the Lord said, arise and go into the city, and you will be told what

 you must do.

Acts 9:17 – 19 - and Ananias went his way 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 were coming has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit. Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once: and he arose and was baptized.

**Saul grows as a new believer in Christ Jesus – makes the good confession**

Acts 9:20 – Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues that He is the Son of God

Acts 9:22 – but Saul kept increasing in strength, and confounding the Jews who lived who dwelt at Damascus , proving that this Jesus is the Christ

Acts 9:27 – 28 – Barnabus took him and brought him to the apostles. And he declared to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had spoken to him and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. So he was with them at Jerusalem coming in and going out

**Conversion & the new creature in Christ**

Matt. 18:3 – truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven

  ***Become like children – outward change is evidence of conversion***

Conversion – to turn around – to change one’s conduct & change one’s mind – it is the outward change that reveals being born again

2 Cor. 5:17 – if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away,

 behold, new things have come

 ***A new creature in Christ = evidence of conversion***

1. Conversion reveals the change in the soul of a person who repents & believes on Jesus Christ
2. Conversion reveals a change in behavior
3. Conversion reveals a release of desire for the old sinful ways of life
4. Conversion reveals new desires of love for God & His Word
5. Conversion reveals new desires to grow in holiness & witness for the Lord Jesus Christ
6. Conversion reveals a love for others
7. Conversion brings assurance of God’s love & salvation

**Conversion’s story**

What I was like before I was saved

How I came to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ

How my life has changed since I was saved