

The Commissioning and Witnessing of Saul of the Resurrection of Jesus

Acts 9:1-31 / April 8 / Easter Sunday

THE COMMISSIONING OF SAUL

1. SAUL GOES TO THE SYNAGOGUES *to Destroy the Disciples of Jesus* (9:1-2, ESV)

But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

2. JESUS GOES TO SAUL *to Save Saul* (9:3-9, ESV)

LIGHT: Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a **light** from heaven shone around him.

VOICE: And falling to the ground, he 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 rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.*"
The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, **hearing the voice** but seeing no one.

BLINDESS: Saul **rose** from the ground, and although his eyes were opened, he **saw nothing**. So they **led** him by the hand and brought him into Damascus.
And for three days he was **without sight**, and neither ate nor drank.

3. JESUS GOES TO ANANIAS *to Commission Saul* (9:10-16, ESV)

LORD: Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The **Lord said** to him in a vision, "*Ananias.*"

ANANIAS: And he said, "*Here I am, Lord.*"

LORD: And the **Lord said** to him, "*Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, 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.*"

ANANIAS: But Ananias answered, "*Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem. And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name.*"

LORD: But the **Lord said** to him, "*Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.*"

4. ANANIAS GOES TO SAUL *to Anoint Saul* (9:17-19a, ESV)

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 so 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 taking food, he was strengthened.

THE WITNESSING OF SAUL

1. SAUL GOES TO DAMASCUS to Witness about Jesus

(9:19b-21, ESV)

Witness: For some days he was with the disciples at Damascus. And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, *“He is the Son of God.”*

Opposition: And all who heard him were amazed and said, *“Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem of those who called upon this name? And has he not come here for this purpose, to bring them bound before the chief priests?”*

But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone; nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, **but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.** (Galatians 1:16-17, ESV)

Witness: But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ.

2. SAUL GOES TO JERUSALEM to Join the Disciples

(9:24b-26a, ESV)

Opposition: 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 in order to kill him,

Witness: but his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket. And when he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples.

3. BARNABAS GOES TO SAUL to Witness to the Apostles

(9:26b-27, ESV)

Opposition: And they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple.

Witness: But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and declared to them how on the road **(1)** he had seen the Lord, **(2)** who spoke to him, and **(3)** how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus.

Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord’s brother. (In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie!) (Galatians 1:18-20, ESV)

4. SAUL GOES TO TARSUS to Escape the Plot to Kill Him

(9:28-30, ESV)

Witness: So he went in and out among them at Jerusalem, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord. And he spoke and disputed against the Hellenists.

Opposition: But they were seeking to kill him. And when the brothers learned this, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.

Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. And I was still unknown in person to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. They only were hearing it said, *“He who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.”* And they glorified God because of me. (Galatians 1:21-24, ESV)

OUTCOME: The Church Experiences Peace, Fear, Comfort and Growth

(9:31, ESV)

So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And

walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied.

PARALLELS IN GOD'S CALLING BETWEEN MOSES AND PAUL

MOSES	PARALLELS IN GOD'S CALLING	PAUL
When the child grew older, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. She named him Moses, "Because," she said, "I drew him out of the water." (Exodus 2:10, ESV)	EDUCATION	"I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as all of you are this day. (Acts 22:3)
One day, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and looked on their burdens, and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his people. He looked this way and that, and seeing no one, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. (Exodus 2:11-12, ESV)	ADVOCATE	I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women, as the high priest and the whole council of elders can bear me witness. From them I received letters to the brothers, and I journeyed toward Damascus to take those also who were there and bring them in bonds to Jerusalem to be punished. (Acts 22:4-5)
And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. (Exodus 3:2, ESV)	LIGHT	"As I was on my way and drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone around me. (Acts 22:6)
When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." (Exodus 3:4, ESV)	VOICE	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 of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.' (Acts 22:7-8)
And he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. (Exodus 3:6, ESV)	FEAR	And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" (Acts 9:4)
He said, "But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain." (Exodus 3:12, ESV)	CALLING	But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel (Acts 9:15)
Then Moses answered, "But behold, they will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say, 'The LORD did not appear to you.'" (Exodus 4:1, ESV)	REJECTION	. For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name." (Acts 9:16, ESV)
And the LORD said to Moses, "When you go back to Egypt, see that you do before Pharaoh all the miracles that I have put in your power. But I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go. (Exodus 4:21, ESV)	OPPOSITION	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 in order to kill him, (Acts 9:23-24)
Moses went back to Jethro his father-in-law and said to him, "Please let me go back to my brothers in Egypt to see whether they are still alive." And Jethro said to Moses, "Go in peace." (Exodus 4:19, ESV)	SUPPORT	And when he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples. And they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and declared to them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who spoke to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus. (Acts 9:26-27, ESV)
Say therefore to the people of Israel, 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment. I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. I will give it to you for a possession. I am the LORD.'" (Exodus 6:2-8, ESV)	MINISTRY	Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. (2 Corinthians 5:17-20)
Thus says the LORD, "By this you shall know that I am the LORD: behold, with the staff that is in my hand I will strike the water that is in the Nile, and it shall turn into blood. The fish in the Nile shall die, and the Nile will stink, and the Egyptians will grow weary of drinking water from the Nile." (Exodus 7:17-18, ESV)	MIRACLES	Now at Lystra there was a man sitting who could not use his feet. He was crippled from birth and had never walked. He listened to Paul speaking. And Paul, looking intently at him and seeing that he had faith to be made well, said in a loud voice, "Stand upright on your feet." And he sprang up and began walking. (Acts 14:8-10)
Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, a darkness to be felt." So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was pitch darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. (Exodus 10:21,22, ESV)	DARKNESS	And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank. (Acts 9:9)
When she could hide him no longer, she took for him a basket made of bulrushes and daubed it with bitumen and pitch. She put the child in it and placed it among the reeds by the river bank / And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages." So the woman took the child and nursed him. When the child grew older, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. She named him Moses, "Because," she said, "I drew him out of the water." (Exodus 2:3; 9-10, ESV)	RESCUE	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 in order to kill him, but his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket. / And he spoke and disputed against the Hellenists. But they were seeking to kill him. And when the brothers learned this, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus. (Acts 9:29-30, ESV)

PAUL'S WRITINGS ABOUT THE RESURRECTION: JESUS IS RAISED FROM THE DEAD...

1. **TO FREE US FROM SIN** (Romans)

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be **united with him in a resurrection** like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also **live with him**. We know that Christ, being **raised from the dead**, will never die again; **death no longer has dominion over him**. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but **the life he lives he lives to God**. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and **alive to God in Christ Jesus**. (Romans 6:1-11, ESV)

2. **TO FREE US FROM THE LAW TO BEAR FRUIT** (Romans)

Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been **raised from the dead**, in order that we may bear fruit for God. For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we **serve in the new way of the Spirit** and not in the old way of the written code. (Romans 7:4-6, ESV)

3. **TO GIVE US LIFE THROUGH THE SPIRIT** (Romans)

But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. **If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.** (Romans 8:10-11, ESV)

4. **TO LAY THE FOUNDATION OF OUR FAITH IN CHRIST** (Corinthians)

Now if Christ is proclaimed as **raised from the dead**, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.

And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.

We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about **God that he raised Christ**, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised.

For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised.

And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. (I Corinthians 15:12-19, ESV)

5. **TO DESTROY THE WORKS OF SATAN** (Corinthians)

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in **Christ shall all be made alive**. But each in his own order: **Christ the firstfruits**, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet." But when it says, "all things are put in subjection," it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. (I Corinthians 15:12-28, ESV)

6. **TO BRING US INTO HIS ETERNAL PRESENCE** (Corinthians)

Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, "I believed, and so I spoke," we also believe, and so we also speak, knowing that **he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus** and bring us with you into his presence. For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God. (2 Corinthians 4:13-15, ESV)

7. **TO SAVE US BY HIS GRACE** (Ephesians)

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, **made us alive together with Christ**—by grace you have been saved— and **raised us up with him** and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. (Ephesians 2:4-9, ESV)

8. **TO HAVE THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD** (Philippians)

For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— that **I may know him and the power of his resurrection**, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. (Philippians 3:7-11, ESV)

9. **TO FORGIVE OUR SINS** (Colossians)

In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also **raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead**. And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, **God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses**, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him. (Colossians 2:11-15, ESV)

10. **TO GIVE US HOPE OF THE RETURN OF JESUS** (Thessalonians)

For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom **he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.** (I Thessalonians 1:9-10, ESV)