



# One God, One Story

FINDING OUR PLACE IN GOD'S STORY



# **Finding Our Place in God's Story**

**Acts 9:1 - 31**

# The Conversion of Saul



- Saul of Tarsus the greatest of sinners (9:1-2)
- Saul meets the one he persecutes (9:3-9)
- Ananias meets the one he fears (9:10-16)
- Ananias ministers to Saul (9:17-19)
- Saul preaches the faith he once destroyed (9:20-22)

# The Impact of Saul's Conversion



- Saul was changed from a persecutor to a bond-slave of Christ.
- Ananias had no idea how God would use him that day.
- Because Paul was God's apostle to the Gentiles, the world will never be the same.

# Principles and Application



- The conversion of Saul shows us the power of God to change lives (1 Tim 1:15–16).
- God works His purposes through human instruments that are willingly obedient to Him.
- God is serious about reaching the world with the Gospel.

# Note the Transition from Jew to Gentile

God at work in History “visiting the Gentiles”

Acts 1-7

Gospel to  
the Jews

Acts 8

Philip to  
Samaria  
and  
Ethiopian  
Eunuch

Acts 9

God  
raises  
up His  
Apostle  
to the  
Gentiles

Acts 10

Peter  
preaches  
to  
Cornelius  
- a Gentile

Acts 11

Antioch  
as  
Sending  
Church  
for Gentile  
outreach

Acts 12

Jews still  
in  
rebellion  
against  
the Gospel

Acts 13-28

Gospel  
to the  
Gentiles

# Principles and Application



- Life is not about us. We are a part of a larger story. Our story becomes significant as we find our place in His story!

# Note the Transition from Jew to Gentile

God at work in History “visiting the Gentiles”

Acts 1-7

Gospel to the Jews

Acts 8

Philip to Samaria and Ethiopian Eunuch

Acts 9

God raises up His Apostle to the Gentiles

Acts 10

Peter preaches to Cornelius - a Gentile

Acts 11

Antioch as Sending Church for Gentile outreach

Acts 12

Jews still in rebellion against the Gospel

Acts 13-28

Gospel to the Gentiles





**Acts 13:46.....18:6.....28:28**

**Acts 1-7**

**Gospel to  
the Jews**

**Acts 8-12**

**Transition**

**Acts 13-28**

**Gospel to the Gentiles**

# Notice how the narrative unfolds



- Intentionally showing God's hand in moving the Gospel ahead...exactly as He had said.
- Reminding us that the individual narratives cannot be understood apart from the meta-narrative.
- Reminding us that it is never "one thing," that presents a challenge.
- Reminding us that God is not threatened by those challenges.

# The Victorious Progress of the Gospel Despite Relentless Opposition

- In Jerusalem 50 days after the Passover when Christ was crucified...

- “...that day there were added about three thousand souls...and the Lord was adding to their number day by day...”  
Acts 2:41,47

# The Victorious Progress of the Gospel Despite Relentless Opposition

- At the Temple where the Sadducees and Captain of the Temple Guard were greatly disturbed...

- “...many of those who heard the message believed: and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.”  
Acts 4:4

# The Victorious Progress of the Gospel Despite Relentless Opposition



- After being released from jail and threatened...

- “...with great power the Apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.”

Acts 4:33

# The Victorious Progress of the Gospel Despite Relentless Opposition

- In spite of Ananias and Saphira whose actions threatened to undo the unity and integrity of the early church and thereby the effectiveness of its witness...

- “...great fear came over the whole church, and over all who heard of these things...and... multitudes of men and women were constantly added to their number.”  
Acts 5:11,14

# The Victorious Progress of the Gospel Despite Relentless Opposition

- Following the disturbance caused by the widows being neglected in the food ministry...

- “The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.” Acts 6:7

# The Victorious Progress of the Gospel Despite Relentless Opposition



- Following the persecution that began with the martyrdom of Stephen...

- “...those who had been scattered went about preaching the word.”  
Acts 8:4



# The Victorious Progress of the Gospel Despite Relentless Opposition



- With the threat that Saul of Tarsus posed to the church, Saul was converted and...

- “...the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up...it continued to increase.” Acts 9:31



# The Victorious Progress of the Gospel Despite Relentless Opposition

- Following the execution of James under Herod...

- “...the word of the Lord continued to grow and to be multiplied.”  
Acts 12:24

# The Victorious Progress of the Gospel Despite Relentless Opposition

- In spite of the resistance Paul faced on his first missionary journey...

- “...they appointed elders for them in every church... [then] they arrived at Antioch... [and] began to report all things that God had done with them and how He had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.”

Acts 14:23,27

# The Victorious Progress of the Gospel Despite Relentless Opposition

- In light of the Jerusalem Council and the Apostles decision regarding Gentiles and Circumcision...

- “...the churches were being strengthened in the faith, and were increasing in number daily.” Acts 16:5



# The Victorious Progress of the Gospel Despite Relentless Opposition



- In spite of the resistance Paul faced on his second missionary journey...

- “...some were persuaded (Acts 17:4),” and “...many... were believing and being baptized (Acts 18:8).”

# The Victorious Progress of the Gospel Despite Relentless Opposition

- In spite of the resistance Paul faced on his third missionary journey - even in places steeped in sorcery like Ephesus...

- “...the word of the Lord was growing mightily and prevailing.”  
Acts 19:20



# The Victorious Progress of the Gospel Despite Relentless Opposition

- In spite of the many death plots against the Apostle Paul (20:3; 21:31; 23:12; 25:3; 27:42), his trials (Acts 23, 24, 25, 26), and imprisonment (Acts 21–28)...

- “...he stayed two full years in his own rented quarters and was welcoming all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered.” Acts 28:30–31

# Principles and Application



- **There is no problem that can ultimately stop the spread of the Gospel.**
- **Luke wants us to see this and make the connections that he underscores in his terminology (8:1-2; 28:14).**
- **Behind this activity of God is the character of God. Don't lose sight of His love and grace that compelled Him to so work in history!**