

“Jesus People Have a Divine Encounter with Jesus” Acts 9:1-25

Take-Home Truth: God brings people to an encounter with Jesus both to save them, but also to give them purpose.

- SALVATION BEGINS WITH A **DIVINE ENCOUNTER** WITH JESUS.
(Acts 9:1-9)

Features of Saul’s Divine Encounter That All Believers Share

- God extends His goodness to sinners **before they believe** in Jesus.

But God had mercy on me so that Christ Jesus could use me as a prime example of his great patience with even the worst sinners. Then others will realize that they, too, can believe in him and receive eternal life.

1 Timothy 1:16 (New Living Translation)

God’s *mercy* = God’s goodness toward those in misery and distress.

God’s *grace* = God’s goodness toward those who deserve only punishment.

God’s *patience* = God’s goodness in withholding of punishment toward those who sin over a period of time.

- Christ’s Spirit **convicts** people far from God **before** they come to know Him.

And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’¹⁵ And I said, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.’ Acts 26:14-15 (English Standard Version)

“Goads” that God Used in Saul’s Life

- God-given **conscience**

Even Gentiles, who do not have God’s written law, show that they know his law when they instinctively obey it, even without having heard it.¹⁵ They demonstrate that God’s law is written in their hearts, for their own conscience and thoughts either accuse them or tell them they are doing right.

Romans 2:14-15 (NLT)

- Stephen’s Example (See Acts 6 and 7)

And when he comes, he will convict the world of its sin, and of God’s righteousness, and of the coming judgment. John 16:8 (NLT)

- Every believer has an **encounter with Jesus**.

And I answered, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And he said to me, ‘I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.’ . . .¹⁰ And I said, ‘What shall I do, Lord?’ . . . Acts 22:8, 10a (ESV)

- SALVATION BRINGS **PURPOSE**: JESUS HAS A PLAN FOR EVERY BELIEVER’S LIFE WHICH WE DISCOVER ONLY AFTER WE MEET HIM.
(Acts 9:10-19)

And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is the Son of God.”²¹ 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?”²² But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ. Acts 9:20-22 (ESV)

Two Purposes God has for Every Believer

- For believers **to become** like Jesus

For I want you to understand what really matters, so that you may live pure and blameless lives until the day of Christ’s return.¹¹ May you always be filled with the fruit of your salvation—the righteous character produced in your life by Jesus Christ—for this will bring much glory and praise to God. Philippians 1:10-11 (NLT)

- For believers **to do** what He assigns

But my life is worth nothing to me unless I use it for finishing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus—the work of telling others the Good News about the wonderful grace of God. Acts 20:24 (NLT)

Don’t act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do. Ephesians 5:17 (NLT)

When many days had passed, the Jews plotted to kill him,²⁴ but their plot became known to Saul. They were watching the gates day and night in order to kill him,²⁵ but his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket. Acts 9:23-25 (ESV)

But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest ²and 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. ³Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. ⁴And falling to the ground he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" ⁵And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" And he said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. ⁶But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do." ⁷The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. ⁸Saul 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. ⁹And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank. Acts 9:1-9 (ESV)

Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord." ¹¹And 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, ¹²and 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." ¹³But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem. ¹⁴And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name." ¹⁵But 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. ¹⁶For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name." ¹⁷So 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." ¹⁸And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized; ¹⁹and taking food, he was strengthened. For some days he was with the disciples at Damascus. Acts 9:10-19 (ESV)