

ACTS TO REVELATION

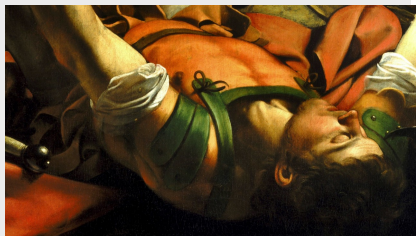
Drive Thru History | The World of the First Christians

This Week

Acts 9:1-31, 11:19-12:24

More Resources

One of my favorite artists is **Michelangelo da Caravaggio**. I think his painting, **The Conversion of Saul**, is one of his most compelling. Here's a link to an interesting discussion about it by 2 art critics. Click **HERE** to view the 5-minute video.



IF YOU WANT TO WATCH

EPISODES of Drive Thru History: Acts to Revelation, you can view them online at TubiTV.com. Just click **HERE** to access their website.



Week 5 Prep

Read Acts 12:25-13:13



Saul of Tarsus and The Road to Damascus

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

In Act 9-12, the four stories we're going to explore raise some important questions about our posture before God. Each is a story about what happens when we are willing to kneel before our good and gracious God and what can happen when we are unwilling to acknowledge that there is One who is greater than us.

- Which part of this week's reading caught your attention the most? What insights did you glean? What questions do you have? Is God speaking to you about a situation in your own life through these Scriptures? What are you learning about God?

THE TRANSFORMATION OF SAUL TO PAUL (Acts 9:1-31)

When we last saw him, Saul was in full support of the execution of the disciple Stephen. Now, he is on his way to Damascus in a furious rage, convinced that the followers of Christ were dangerous heretics who must be silenced. While on his way to arrest the followers of Jesus, Saul encounters the risen Christ. He is knocked off his horse and from his backside he starts re-examining what he believed.

- The risen Jesus asks Saul, "Why are you persecuting ME?" What do we discover about Jesus' connection to His church from that question?
- Ananias was probably on Saul's most wanted list. What do you think Paul began to learn about the gospel when Ananias laid his hands on Saul and called him, "Brother, Saul"? To what degree have you come to trust that the good news of the gospel is for you?
- How was Saul's life transformed when he knelt before the risen Jesus?

Even More Resources

Z. Randall Stroope has written a powerful piece of music for an a cappella choir entitled *The Conversion of Saul*. At the beginning of this composition, Stroope captures the fury of Saul as he heads off to Damascus to put a stop to the Christians. Along the way, Saul encounters the risen Jesus who blinds him with light and calls his name, "Saul!" Jesus then asks Saul a question, "Why?"

"Why are you persecuting me, Saul?" Jesus then directs Saul to fall down on his knees and as Saul bows before Christ, Jesus begins to transform his heart and his entire life.

You can listen to this remarkable composition by clicking [HERE](#). Subtitles have been added to the video, translating the portion in Latin and for clarity..

Small Group Prayer Requests

To help you pray for one another during the week, please take notes on the requests that are shared. Please remember that everything people talk about in your group is confidential.

BARNABAS, THE SON OF ENCOURAGEMENT (Acts 9:23-31, 11:20-30)

- What do we already know about Barnabas from previous chapters in the Book of Acts?
- What do we discover about this "Son of Encouragement" from Acts 9 and 11?
- What evidence do we see in Barnabas' life that he is a person who has spent time on his knees before Jesus?

HEROD: CONSUMED FROM WITHIN (Acts 12:1-24)

Decked out in silver robes, King Herod, once again, refused to kneel before the King of Kings.

- How is Herod's life a cautionary tale for all of us, whether we have limited power or great power?

PETER AND THE POWER OF PRAYER (Acts 12:1-19)

The situation facing the first Christians took another violent turn with the arrest and execution of James, the brother of John. Peter is once again thrown in jail and immediately, the church fell on their knees and started to pray.

- Describe what happens to Peter. How do you process the different outcomes for Peter and James?
- Describe the way the church first responded when Peter arrives at Mary's house in the middle of their prayer meeting? What surprises you, encourages you, challenges you as you watch the first disciples pray?

Let's spend time on our knees as we share prayer requests and pray for one another.

Notes from the Video and Discussion

What insights, questions, challenges, encouragements are you taking with you? Record your thoughts and any action steps you intend to take in the space below.