July 9

Philip

Spreading the Word

 The believers being persecuted spread around the area, Philip went to Samaria to spread the Word.

 There was a man in the area, a magician, named Simon saw Philip’s miracles he believed, was baptized and then just tagged along.

 Peter and John heard of Philip’s work so they went to Samaria and gave the believers the Holy Spirit – Read: Acts 8:16, 17.

 Simon saw this and wanted to buy the art of laying on of hands to give the Holy Spirit. Peter had some strong words for him – Read: Acts 8:20.We give money to the Lord because we want to further His kingdom here on earth, but the money we give has nothing to do with buying the Holy Spirit or salvation because that is impossible.

 Philip was called to minister to and Ethiopian Eunuch, an official of the queen of Ethiopia – Read: Acts 8:26-36.

 Our conversion too may be as quick as the Eunuch’s but it may also take years and we don’t necessarily have to be able to pin point the day of the change to the Lord, we’re just as saved as those who can name the day of their conversion.

VERSE FOR TODAY: Act 8:38

PRAYER THOUGHT: Praise be to you O God, for your Son that died making eternal life possible for all who believe and repent!

July 10

Saul

Persecutor Called

 Saul was one of the reasons the believers spread out around the region, Saul by persecuting believers, was trying to destroy the church – Read: Acts 8:3

 Saul went one step further, he went to the high priest and obtained a letter of introduction so he could go into the synagogues and arrest believers! Saul was on his way to Damascus to use the introductory letter – Read: Acts 9:3-8.

 Here we see a man blinded by God, we so many times are blinded by greed, hate, jealousy or pride so we can’t see what God has for us if we could only repent, and then we could be free from the burden of sin and live in the light of the Lord.

VERSE FOR TODAY: Acts 9:9

PRAYER THOUGHT: O Lord, let the light of your word shine through me so brightly that others will know that you are not only in my heart but my very being lives in your love.

July 11

Saul

Receives Sight

 Saul remained blind in Damascus, God called a reluctant Ananias to free Saul – Read: Acts 9:10-16.

 As quickly as Saul was blinded, he could see – Read: Acts 9:17.

 Saul came from the darkness into the light both through his eyes and his heart. As God told Ananias that he had chosen Saul, so also he chooses us to be his followers, but we must accept his calling, we do have the free will to accept or reject him. If we reject him all we can hope for is eternal damnation but if we accept him, repenting of our sins and changing our lives to follow Christ’s example we can look forward to eternal life with him; Our life as a Christian will not be smooth but God is there to comfort and guide.

VERSE FOR TODAY: Acts 9:18.

PRAYER THOUGHT: Thank-you for being my strength and my guide.

July 12

Saul

Preparation for Preaching

 If we read only in Acts, it seems Saul goes immediately into the ministry but in the Letter to the Galatians it is revealed – Read: Galatians 1:15-24. From this passage it seems that Saul went through quite an extensive time of study, prayer and meditation before revealing himself to the apostles in Jerusalem as one of them.

 When Saul did start to preach in Damascus, he had not been forgotten – Read: Acts 9:21.

 There was an assassination plan – Read: Acts 9:23 but he was spared – Read: Acts 9:24, 25.

 Those who undergo a radical conversion, like Saul, may find it hard to shake the old reputation once converted. Fellow Christians will have to search their hearts and minds and give the new convert a chance to grow. Unfortunately new Christians are often discouraged instead of encouraged by a lack of acceptance from established Christians.

VERSE FOR TODAY: Acts 9:31

PRAYER THOUGHT: Help me to give new converts encouragement and help, not letting a poor attitude of disbelief in their sincerity make them once again fall by the wayside.

July 13

Peter

On the Road

 Peter did not stay just in Jerusalem but traveled throughout Judea teaching and healing – Read: Acts 9:33, 34.

 Peter went from Lydda to Joppa to the deathbed of Tabitha – Read: Acts 9:38-42.

 While Peter was staying in Joppa, a man in Caesarea named Cornelius, received a message from God to have Peter brought to Caesarea so he sent some men to fetch Peter.

 Peter in the meantime had a vision about clean and unclean – Read: Acts10:9-16.

 Peter did not know what to think about this vision, while he was trying to figure it out the men showed up from Caesarea and Peter went with them as the Lord had instructed.

VERSE FOR TODAY: Acts 10:19-21

PRAYER THOUGHT: Thank-you, O Lord, for the miracles in my life.

July 14

Peter

The Meaning Revealed

 Peter really had a hard time with the vision of the animals in the sheet, Peter arrived at the house of Cornelius, a gentile, a place where any well trained Jew would not go but the meaning of the vision of the unclean animals taught Peter a valuable lesson here – Read: Acts 10:28-35.

 Most of Peter’s and the Apostle’s time had been spent Christianizing the Jews now a whole new ministry was opening up to them in bringing the Gospel to the Gentiles.

 For us today this passage means, as it did for Peter, that everyone, no matter what race or nationality must hear the Word of God and be given the opportunity to receive eternal life.

 VERSE FOR TODAY: Acts 10:16

PRAYER THOUGHT: Help me, O Lord, to extend your love and grace to all I come in contact with not just those of my race and social standing.

July 15

Saul

A Helping Hand

 The apostles spread out quite far because of the stoning of Stephen – Read: Acts 11:19-21. When the church in Jerusalem heard about the growth of believers in Antioch, they decided to send some help - Read: Acts 11: 22-24.

 Barnabas went for help too – Read: Acts 11:25-26 – If you ever wondered now you know where believers were first called Christians!!

 This may be the first Christian mission project – Read: Acts 11:27-29. The famine was prophesied, it came to pass, the disciples, the believers decided to help their brothers out in Judea as they could because of the famine.

 The Lord, Saul and Barnabas make quite a team, preaching, teaching and helping others. We, too, can team up with the Lord to help others, not only spiritually but also with money, there are thousands less fortunate than we are and need our help. We so often “freeze up” when money is mentioned, but we can help missionaries with our money to help others spread the word and with medical help in places we could not possibly go.

VERSE FOR TODAY: Acts 11:30.

PRAYER THOUGHT: Help me, O Lord to be generous with the money you have blessed me with, help my money to make a difference in spreading the Gospel, whether in word or deed in places I cannot go.

July 16

King Herod

Royal Persecutor

 King Herod, the ruler of all Palestine, launched a campaign against the Christians – Read: Acts 12:2. This won approval of the Jews so King Herod continued his reign of terror - Read: Acts 12:3-4. Peter had the support of the church –Read: Acts 12:5.

 The power of prayer won out – Read: Acts 12:6-17. It is interesting in this passage of scripture that we find the church praying for the release of Peter in verse 5 but when he is standing at the door and Rhoda announces that Peter is at the door, they think she is out of her mind! We find it hard to accept that our prayers are really answered!

 King Herod suffered a very unusual death – Read: Acts 12:23. His persecution did not stop the spread of the Gospel.

VERSE FOR TODAY: Acts 12:24

PRAYER THOUGHT: May I always give you the honor and glory, O Lord and help your word spread and be strong.