

A gravel road leads towards a dead end. On the right side of the road, there is a yellow diamond-shaped sign that reads "NO OUTLET". The road is flanked by green grass and trees. In the background, a farm with a silo is visible. A green text box with a white border is overlaid on the bottom half of the image.

# **U TURN WITH MURDER ON THE BRAIN**

**Acts 9: 1-20**

# Acts 9:1-20 (New Living Translation)

## Saul's Conversion

<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest <sup>2</sup> and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup> As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. <sup>4</sup> He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" <sup>5</sup> "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked.

"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. <sup>6</sup> "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."





## Acts 9:1-20 (New Living Translation)

<sup>7</sup> The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. <sup>8</sup> Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. <sup>9</sup> For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.

<sup>10</sup> In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!"

"Yes, Lord," he answered.

<sup>11</sup> The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. <sup>12</sup> In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight."

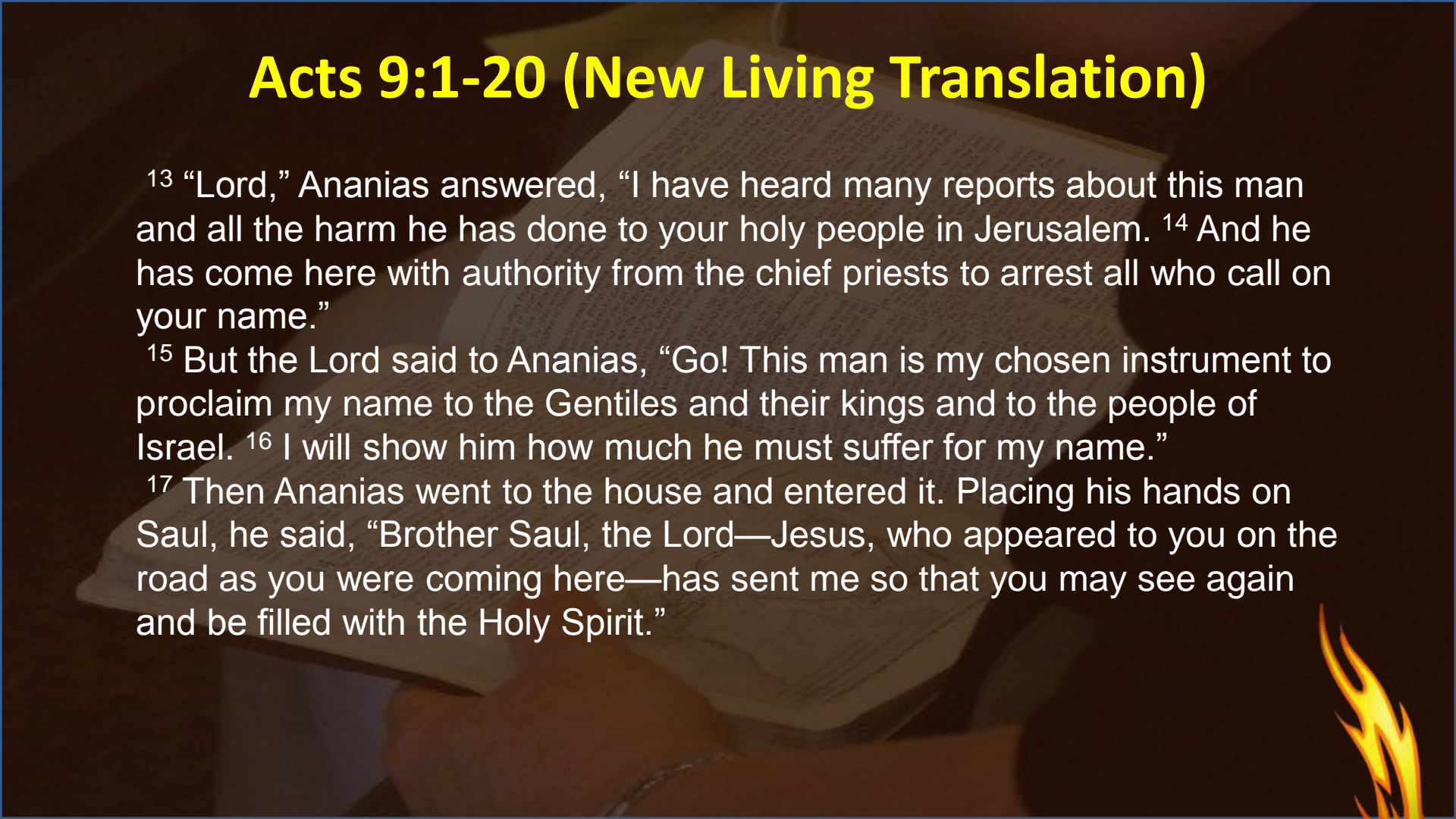


## Acts 9:1-20 (New Living Translation)

<sup>13</sup> “Lord,” Ananias answered, “I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup> And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name.”

<sup>15</sup> But the Lord said to Ananias, “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. <sup>16</sup> I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.”

<sup>17</sup> Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”





## Acts 9:1-20 (New Living Translation)

<sup>18</sup> Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, <sup>19</sup> and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

### **Saul in Damascus and Jerusalem**

Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. <sup>20</sup> At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God.



## **THOUGHT:**

**You know you have made God after your own image when God has the same enemies as you.**

# TAKE HOME

**GOD'S WAYS ARE NOT OUR WAYS.**  
Saul's conversion proves it.

- 1) **Problem:** Who is the person or persons that I detest?
- 2) **Resolve:** Since God "so loved the world" --I must and will love others too.
- 3) **Action:** I will live a life of loving others. God will help me overcome hate, malice and bitterness, just as God helped Paul.



## Catch Them If We Can -Acts 9:1-2

- ❖ It's not enough to chase "God's enemies" out ...Saul was bent on chasing them down.
- ❖ With letters seeking extradition, he even ran off to foreign lands in search "God's enemies". (Acts 26:11)
- ❖ He voted with those who sought the death penalty for those of The Way. Acts 26:10





## THOUGHT:

**The troubling thing about Paul was: He loved God and thought he was doing God's will. He thought he was doing the right thing.**

*(Sadly, we are all guilty of this)*

## Hammered On The Highway -Acts 9:3-5

- ❖ How's that for a 'stop' light! Brighter than the sun. (*How has God tried to get your attention?*)
- ❖ Surprise, surprise! Who are you, Lord? Jesus? (*Our concepts of God fall short*)
- ❖ Why are you persecuting me?  
"It was the Head in heaven crying out on behalf of the members which were still on earth" --*Augustine*



## In Damascus You'll Learn What This Is All About -Acts 9:6-9

- ❖ **Blind**, he is led to a place of repentance and renewal (*We all need new eyes*)
- ❖ **Dubious** Ananias gets his assignment: “Go find the Terrorist!” (*Even the Christian needed a lesson in unconditional love*)
- ❖ **Confused** Ananias: “But Lord!”  
(*Loving is difficult*)  
God: “Go ahead, Saul has had a vision and you are in it.”





## Stranger Than Fiction... Saul Is God's Chosen Emissary

- ❖ **God has a plan and purpose for everyone**, even murderous Paul (*Difficult truth: God has a purpose for those you detest, too*)
- ❖ **Speak love.** The strangest words ever: "Brother Saul" --*Brother?!*
- ❖ **Baptism binds us together.** Baptizing "enemies" brings about the unimaginable.



## Lessons For Ananias

- ❖ **Love your enemies.** Who'd have guessed he would ever say such things? "Jesus is the Son of God"
- ❖ **Move beyond presumption.** Of course the first reaction was astonishment and disbelief. What would you expect?
- ❖ **Break through.** Ananias broke through *the difficult* and experienced *the miraculous*.



## Saul's Conversion

### ...Anything Is Possible With God

- ❖ **Spoken word:** His testimony would be solid evidence of the power of the Gospel.
- ❖ **Written word:** He wrote more books of the New Testament.
- ❖ **Living word:** He planted countless churches. His impact on the world is beyond measure.





# Your Turn. Be A Paul! Be An Ananias! Be a Living Epistle!

- ❖ **Your spoken word:** What if you told others all that God has rescued you from?
- ❖ **Your written words:** How can you use notes, email, facebook to help others?
- ❖ **Your living word:** How can you be a better “doer of the word” especially with those you detest?



# THOUGHT:

1. Love **God** =
2. Love your **Neighbor** =
3. Love you **Enemy**.

- (1) I know I love **God**  
because I love my **Neighbor**.  
(2) I know I love my Neighbor  
because I love my Enemy.  
(3) Because I love my **Enemy**. I  
know I love God.

- (3) If I don't love  
my enemy,  
(2) I cannot truly  
love my Neighbor,  
and (1) I cannot  
fully love God.

## Is God Calling You? If You Are New To Faith, Do As Paul Did

- ❖ **Realize God has a plan and purpose for you.** Are you ready to experience it?
- ❖ **It begins with baptism.** Are you ready to step into the water and make your pledge?
- ❖ **Your fresh new vision awaits.** Heaven is calling and God is waiting?







# Confession

**I believe that Jesus is  
the Christ, the Son of  
the living God.**

**I trust him as my Lord  
and Savior.**

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Prayer





**Go On God's Road!  
And Never Exit!  
Acts 9: 1-20**