

Sunday, May 4, 2025

## Scripture Reading: Acts 9:1-6, (7-20)

***Being a Christian is more than just an instantaneous conversion; it is a daily process whereby you grow to be more and more like Christ. —Billy Graham***

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Today's Bible reading tells the incredible story of the apostle Paul's dramatic experience on the road to Damascus. As I read the account, I reviewed other conversion stories from the annals of church history. My mind immediately went to Saint Augustine of Hippo (354–430), then to Martin Luther's experience a little more than a thousand years later in A.D. 1517.

But then consider the case of an 18<sup>th</sup>-century slave trader. His name was John Newton (1725–1807). Newton had a troubled youth, working on slave ships and living a life of moral recklessness. His conversion occurred in 1748 during a violent storm at sea. Fearing for his life, Newton cried out to God for mercy, and the ship was miraculously spared.

The experience was unnerving and understandably caused Newton to reevaluate his life. He abandoned the slave trade and became an Anglican priest. He later became a passionate advocate for the abolition of slavery, working alongside figures like William Wilberforce and others. So complete was his transformation from sinner to saint, that it was memorialized in one of the most famous hymns of recorded history, "Amazing Grace."

One more example of amazing conversions: C.S. Lewis (1898–1963), the renowned author and Christian apologist. For much of his early life, Lewis was an atheist, deeply skeptical of religion in general and Christianity in particular. However, after a series of intellectual and spiritual struggles, he began to feel drawn to Christianity. Influenced by his friends, such as J.R.R. Tolkien, and through his own reading, Lewis eventually converted in 1931.

He described his conversion in his book, *Surprised by Joy*, where he writes about the moment he reluctantly gave in to God's call, calling himself "the most dejected and reluctant convert in all England." His conversion led him to become one of the most influential Christian thinkers of the 20th century with works like *Mere Christianity*, *The Screwtape Letters*, *A Grief Observed* and others — reaching millions with the message of faith.

God's power to transform lives is truly powerful and amazing!

—Timothy Merrill

*Prayer: All-merciful God, thank you for bringing your transformative grace into my life. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

## Daily Bible Readings

**Sunday:** Luke 14-17

**Monday:** 1 Samuel 4-7

**Tuesday:** 1 Samuel 8-10

**Wednesday:** 1 Samuel 11-13

**Thursday:** 1 Samuel 14-16

**Friday:** 1 Samuel 17-20

**Saturday:** Psalms 43-45

## Verse to Remember

*Why are you cast down,  
O my soul ... Hope in God.*

—Psalm 43:5

## May 2025

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

## BIRTH DATES ... OR NOT?

**DIRECTIONS:** Is the year following each person's name the year he or she was born, or the year he or she died? Write a B for "born" or a D for "died." *Answers to the right.*

PERSON	YEAR	B or D?	PERSON	YEAR	B or D?
William Shakespeare	1616		Mahatma Gandhi	1869	
Martin Luther	1483		Beethoven	1827	
Napoleon	1769		Joan of Arc	1431	
Henry Ford	1863		Aristotle	322 BC	
Julius Caesar	44 BC		Elizabeth I	1533	
Cleopatra	30 BC		Charles Darwin	1882	
Christopher Columbus	1451		Saint Francis	1181	
Marco Polo	1324		Constantine the Great	337	
Saint Augustine	354		Johann S. Bach	1685	
Michelangelo	1564		Rembrandt	1606	
Galileo	1564		John Milton	1674	
Charlemagne	814		Harriet Tubman	1913	
Abraham Lincoln	1809		Babe Ruth	1895	
Daniel Webster	1852		Jane Austen	1775	
Thomas Edison	1931		Edgar Allan Poe	1849	
Cicero	43 BC		King Henry VIII	1491	
Calamity Jane	1903		Indira Gandhi	1917	
Florence Nightingale	1820		Leonardo da Vinci	1452	

Answers (in alphabetical order by first or only word [name]):

Abraham Lincoln-B  
Aristotle-D  
Babe Ruth-B  
Beethoven-D  
Calamity Jane-D  
Charlemagne-D  
Charles Darwin-D  
Christopher Columbus-B  
Cicero-D  
Cleopatra-D  
Constantine the Great-D  
Daniel Webster-D  
Edgar Allan Poe-D  
Elizabeth I-B  
Galileo-B  
Harriet Tubman-D  
Henry Ford-B  
Indira Gandhi-B  
Jane Austen-B  
Joan of Arc-D  
Johann S. Bach-B  
John Milton-D  
Julius Caesar-D  
King Henry VIII-B  
Mahatma Gandhi-B  
Marco Polo-D  
Martin Luther-B  
Michelangelo-D  
Napoleon-B  
Rembrandt-B  
Saint Augustine-B  
Saint Francis-B  
Thomas Edison-D  
William Shakespeare-D



*MAY the Lord bless you, and MAY be keep you; MAY the Lord make his face shine upon you and MAY be be gracious to you; MAY the Lord turn his face toward you and MAY be give you peace.* —Adapted from the Aaronic Blessing of Numbers 6:24-26