

Damascus Road

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Preacher: Paul Barker

[0 : 00] Well, let's see how well we've paid attention to that reading. When Paul was speaking to the crowd, what language did he speak? Josh?

Hebrew, very good. And I wonder why it was Hebrew. He spoke to the army commander in Greek because the army commander wouldn't have spoken Hebrew.

He was a Roman Empire's soldier and he probably would only have spoken Greek. Paul changed his language to speak to the crowd because they were Jewish people who thought that Paul didn't like the Jews.

So he spoke in Hebrew the Jewish language to try and identify with them. At the beginning of his speech he says fathers and brothers.

Very strange because it's exactly the way Stephen began his speech in chapter 7. And when Stephen's speech ended they put him to death and Paul approved of that.

[1 : 05] Do you remember what Paul was doing when they put Stephen to death? It says it in the reading we've just heard. Yeah. Holding their coats. Holding their coats. That's right.

And he was also approving of what they'd done. And now Paul has begun a speech the same way Stephen did. And it makes us think uh-oh what's going to happen to him.

That he's rescued by the Roman leader. What does Paul say about how he was educated? Does anyone remember the name of the person who educated him?

Or what sort of person that was? He says it in the reading we've just heard. Any adults paying attention? Gamaliel?

Yes. Who was Gamaliel? Great Pharisee teacher. Revered teacher. Yeah. Yeah. Paul was saying to this Jewish crowd who didn't like Paul and wanted to kill him.

[2 : 05] I was taught by one of your most famous teachers. Called Gamaliel. So he was brought up to be a very strict Jew. Who knew all the laws.

Because one of the things about Paul they're saying is. We want to put him to death because he doesn't like our laws. And Paul is speaking in their language. And he's saying I was brought up as one of you. As a very strict Jew.

In fact he says I was very zealous like you are. So zealous that I was persecuting Christians. Do you know what. How he described.

What name he used. To describe the Christians in that passage we heard. It says. Paul says that he was so. Zealous.

That he persecuted. And then it's got the way that he described the Christians. Anyone else. The way.

[3 : 01] This way or the way. It's a funny name. Imagine if somebody says. What religion are you. Or what do you believe. You say. I'm a member of the way. Do you want to.

Any guesses about why people call Christians. The way. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Maybe the way.

Because people who didn't like them called them the way to hell or something. No. Maybe it's a bit different. What about Emma? Good.

Good. They believe in the way, the truth and the life. And what is the way, the truth and the life? Jesus. Yeah. Hayden. What were you going to say? Yeah. Maybe Emma's said it already.

[3 : 58] So, the Christians are the way because they believe Jesus is the way to God. Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. Now, what do you remember about Paul becoming a Christian?

We saw the video from chapter 9, but then he tells them again how he became a Christian. So, what city was he going to? What city was he walking down the road to? Oh, Emma? Damascus. That's right. Damascus is still a city today. Do you know what country it's the capital of? Very old city.

Syria. Capital of Syria. It's not all that far from Jerusalem. Maybe 100 miles or maybe 150 miles or something like that. Paul was going there to persecute Christians and what happened to him? Things that happened to him. Iliad. Almost got crucified. Well, they're not quite on the road to Damascus.

[5 : 04] Josiah. He got a vision.

Okay. Who was in the vision? Jesus. Okay. Good. What else, Josh? He fell over. Then he saw a bright light.

Yep. And he said to him. And the person said to him, I'm going to persecute me. Yep. Then he said to him, I'm the king.

And then, while we're down to the door, he was blind. Then he was blind. Good. Good. So, how did he get to the end of the road? Someone else.

Do you remember? He saw Jesus. It made him blind. How did he get to the end of the road, Jack? Oh, sorry.

[6 : 02] You didn't have your hand up. Josiah. His friends helped him. That's right. And do you remember the name of the man in Damascus who told him and gave him his sight back?

Complicated name. Not Jesus. Who was the name of the man in Damascus? Jack? I am he.

No. Began with a. A. A. A. A. A. A. Yep. Elliot. Not Adam. Katie.

Ananias. Good. And he's the one who gave him his sight back. Now, for Paul, when he became a Christian, it happened very suddenly. One minute, he's walking down the road as a hater of Christians and a hater of Jesus.

And within a few minutes after the vision, he's a lover of Jesus. He's blind. He's following Jesus.

And a few days later, he's baptized and forever is a follower of Jesus.

[7 : 06] Now, hands up here if there's anyone here who can say that you became a Christian on a particular day. Anyone here? Yeah.

Linda. How old were you when you became a Christian? 36. 36. And what happened on that particular day when you became a Christian? Great.

And they prayed for you. And that very day, you became a Christian. And your life changed overnight. Wow.

Great. So, which road were you on at the time? Maybe not Damascus, but we talk about it, don't we? Damascus road experience that changes our life.

Anyone else who became a Christian at a particular day that you can remember? Is it Judy? No, who's putting your hand? Ruth.

[8 : 12] How old were you, Ruth? 13. 13. 13. And where were you on the day that you became a Christian? Answer. Several. 33.

A Christian fellowship. 12. And what changed? 13. What happened? 14. 15. 16. 15. 16.

wow the leader had asked you to give a testimony about being a christian and you didn't have one because you weren't a christian so you became a christian so you could give a testimony all on the same day wow is there anyone else who uh put up your hand if you can remember the particular day that you became a christian wow so a little country gathering of christians and went forward and was prayed for and became a christian at the age of nine that's fantastic many of us don't know a day that we became a christian for some people your your parents are christians you've been brought up in a christian family you've always believed in jesus and that's fantastic and whether you know the day or you don't know the day god has done a powerful thing in you to help you believe in jesus what we're going to do is i'm going to invite you to go back to your parents for a few minutes and in i want you to form groups of you know 10 or something like that it doesn't matter if it's with people you don't know and just say one or two it doesn't have to be everyone some of you don't want to share that's fine just tell people in the group how you became a christian whether or not you can remember the day doesn't matter so uh if you're able to do that in your groups that would be great so why don't you go back to your parents the kids you can ask your mum or dad to tell you how they became a christian and uh and anyone else in the group feel free to make groups of 10 whether or not you've got children in them doesn't matter and just share how how you became a

christian if you can remember it doesn't matter if you don't uh and we've got about five six seven minutes for this you you you you you you you