

Wild WEST: Paul's Adventures in Acts

First Adventure: Jesus (Acts 9:1-18)

***An encounter with Jesus is interrupting** – Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest² 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.³ As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. (Acts 9:1-3)*

***An encounter with Jesus is communal** - He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"⁵ "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. (Acts 9:4-5)*

***An encounter with Jesus is personal** - "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."⁷ The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone.⁸ 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.⁹ For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything. (Acts 9:6-9)*

***An encounter with Jesus is divinely directed** - In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!" "Yes, Lord," he answered.¹¹ 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.¹² In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight." (Acts 9:10-12)*

An encounter with Jesus will change our perspective

- **Change our perspective about humanity** - "Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem.¹⁴ And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name." (Acts 9:13-14)
- **Change our perspective about grace** - 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. (Acts 9:15)
- **Change our perspective about suffering** - I will show him how much he must suffer for my name. (Acts 9:16)

***An encounter with Jesus makes new creations**- 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 9:17)*

***An encounter with Jesus will give you vision** - Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptid... (Acts 9:18)*

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. (Phil 3:12)