



— **Three Visions** —

**Acts 9-10, Rev 1, 5, 21**  
**Small Group Plan**

*To have found God and still to pursue Him  
is the soul's paradox of love,  
scorned indeed by the too easily satisfied religionist,  
but justified in happy experience by the children of the burning heart.*

— A. W. Tozer.

**OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...**

- How easy is it for you to dream and make brand new plans?
- How willing are you to rethink, reconsider and even change your thoughts and ideas?

**LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...**

— **PAUL'S VISION: THE NEW HUMANITY** —

**Acts 9:1-6**

<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."

- Saul's teacher was Gamaliel. Notice his advice regarding Christians (Acts 5:34-39).
- How did Saul respond to this advice and what does it reveal about him?
- How would you describe the shock of Jesus' confrontation on the Damascus road?
- What is the significance of Jesus saying, "Why do you persecute me?"
- How was this vision the beginning of Paul's new theology?
  - "all have sinned" (Romans 3:23)
  - "it is by grace you have been saved" (Ephesians 2:5)
  - "the message of the cross" (1 Corinthians 1:18)
  - "remember Jesus Christ, this is my gospel" (2 Timothy 2:8)?

## — PETER'S VISION – THE NEW COMMUNITY —

Acts 10:1-17

<sup>1</sup> At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. <sup>2</sup> He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly. <sup>3</sup> One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, “Cornelius!” <sup>4</sup> Cornelius stared at him in fear. “What is it, Lord?” he asked. The angel answered, “Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. <sup>5</sup> Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter. <sup>6</sup> He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea.” <sup>7</sup> When the angel who spoke to him had gone, Cornelius called two of his servants and a devout soldier who was one of his attendants. <sup>8</sup> He told them everything that had happened and sent them to Joppa. <sup>9</sup> About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. <sup>10</sup> He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. <sup>11</sup> He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. <sup>12</sup> It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles of the earth and birds of the air. <sup>13</sup> Then a voice told him, “Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.” <sup>14</sup> “Surely not, Lord!” Peter replied. “I have never eaten anything impure or unclean.” <sup>15</sup> The voice spoke to him a second time, “Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.” <sup>16</sup> This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven. <sup>17</sup> While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision, the men sent by Cornelius found out where Simon’s house was and stopped at the gate.

- Cornelius is a leader in an occupying army. Why did God give him a special vision?
- Review Leviticus 11. How does Peter feel when God says, “kill and eat” (v. 13)?
- What message is God wanting Peter to understand (v. 15)?
- Since Peter is so far over on the “clean” side of the “clean/unclean” scale, why did God specifically choose him to carry this message of a new, wider community?

## — JOHN'S VISION – THE NEW FUTURE —

Revelation 1:9-18

<sup>9</sup> I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. <sup>10</sup> On the Lord’s Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, <sup>11</sup> which said: “Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea.” <sup>12</sup> I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, <sup>13</sup> and among the lampstands was someone “like a son of man,” dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. <sup>14</sup> His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. <sup>15</sup> His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. <sup>16</sup> In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His

face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance. <sup>17</sup> When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: “Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. <sup>18</sup> I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

- What do we know about John’s circumstances when he received his vision (v. 9-10)?
- Why did John faint upon seeing the image of the powerful Jesus?
- What is the significance of Jesus holding “the keys of death and Hades”?

#### **Revelation 5:11-12**

<sup>11</sup> Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. <sup>12</sup> In a loud voice they sang:

“Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain,  
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength  
and honor and glory and praise!”

- Why tell John (and us) of the thousands upon thousands of angels praising Jesus?
- What is filling John’s heart as he sees this vision?

#### **Revelation 21:1-4**

<sup>1</sup> Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. <sup>2</sup> I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. <sup>4</sup> He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.

- Describe the relationship you see in this vision.
- Describe the victory that is captured in this vision.

### **USE IT / APPLY IT ...**

- **NEW HUMANITY** – Which part of Paul’s new theology is the most difficult for our culture to accept? Why? Which part do you need/want a clearer and deeper understanding?
- **NEW COMMUNITY** – How would you describe the power of prejudice? How has it hurt God’s ministry in the world?
- **NEW FUTURE** – How should it impact the way we live and feel now to know that God will absolutely, without a doubt, completely win in the end?
- Pray for our vision that, like Paul, Peter, and John, we too can give our lives over to God’s transforming power. Pray that we will be willing to believe that God can do far more than all we can imagine.