

## God's Greatest Provisions

**Acts 9: 1-19** *But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest*

*2 and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.*

*3 Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him.*

*4 And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?"*

*5 And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" And he said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.*

*6 But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do."*

*7 The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one.*

*8 Saul rose from the ground, and although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. So they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus.*

*9 And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.*

*10 Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord."*

*11 And the Lord said to him, "Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying,*

*12 and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight."*

*13 But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem.*

*14 And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name."*

*15 But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.*

*16 For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name."*

**17** So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”

**18** And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized;

**19** and taking food, he was strengthened.

**Acts 26: 1-29** So Agrippa said to Paul, “You have permission to speak for yourself.” Then Paul stretched out his hand and made his defense:

**2** “I consider myself fortunate that it is before you, King Agrippa, I am going to make my defense today against all the accusations of the Jews,

**3** especially because you are familiar with all the customs and controversies of the Jews. Therefore I beg you to listen to me patiently.

**4** “My manner of life from my youth, spent from the beginning among my own nation and in Jerusalem, is known by all the Jews.

**5** They have known for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that according to the strictest party of our religion I have lived as a Pharisee.

**6** And now I stand here on trial because of my hope in the promise made by God to our fathers,

**7** to which our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly worship night and day. And for this hope I am accused by Jews, O king!

**8** Why is it thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead?

**9** “I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things in opposing the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

**10** And I did so in Jerusalem. I not only locked up many of the saints in prison after receiving authority from the chief priests, but when they were put to death I cast my vote against them.

**11** And I punished them often in all the synagogues and tried to make them blaspheme, and in raging fury against them I persecuted them even to foreign cities.

**12** “In this connection I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests.

**13** At midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, that shone around me and those who journeyed with me.

**14 And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’**

**15 And I said, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.**

**16 But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you,**

**17 delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you**

**18 to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’**

**19 “Therefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, 20 but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout all the region of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance.**

**21 For this reason the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me.**

**22 To this day I have had the help that comes from God, and so I stand here testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass:**

**23 that the Christ must suffer and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles.”**

**24 And as he was saying these things in his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, “Paul, you are out of your mind; your great learning is driving you out of your mind.”**

**25 But Paul said, “I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I am speaking true and rational words.**

**26 For the king knows about these things, and to him I speak boldly. For I am persuaded that none of these things has escaped his notice, for this has not been done in a corner.**

**27 King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe.”**

**28 And Agrippa said to Paul, “In a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?”**

**29 And Paul said, “Whether short or long, I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am—except for these chains.”**



**30 Then the king rose, and the governor and Bernice and those who were sitting with them.**

**31 And when they had withdrawn, they said to one another, “This man is doing nothing to deserve death or imprisonment.”**

**32 And Agrippa said to Festus, “This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.”**

Notice that Paul spoke very respectfully to King Agrippa, and he took full advantage of the opportunity to share his testimony.

Back in **Acts 9:15**, Jesus had said that Paul would “...**bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.**”

On a lesser scale than with Paul, this is what God did with Billy Graham.

Billy Graham was given an open door of opportunity before so many people in very important places, and he consistently presented a plain presentation of the gospel of salvation.

In **Acts 26: 18**, Paul is telling what Jesus said about why He sent him to the Gentiles.

***18 to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’***

He listed five goals that God has for people’s lives, and I submit to you that these goals have not changed, even to this day.

Furthermore, these five goals represent what I believe to be the greatest provisions for mankind that we would ever need.

### **1. To open our eyes.**

This is a statement about people’s understanding.

**There are three things people need to understand about God,**

**Who He is**



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**What He has done**

**What He has promised**

**2. To turn them from darkness to light.**

Darkness is consistently used in the Bible as a reference to sin, and light as a reference to righteousness.

We have become the righteousness of God in Christ, but unless we understand this fact, we miss many blessings that are connected with it.

**3. To turn them from the power of Satan to the power of God.**

God has goals for people's lives, but so does Satan.

**Satan's primary goals for an individual are to:**

**Steal the word of God from his life**

**To kill any potential ministry**

**To destroy his/hers peace, joy, and contentment**

Satan hates mankind for two reasons: mankind has been created in the image of God, and he has been given dominion over the earth.

Now, Satan's goal is to steal, kill, and destroy, but as we are told in John 10:10, Jesus is "come that we might have life, and that more abundantly."

So, one of God's goals is turn us from Satan's power to God's power.

**4. That they receive the forgiveness of sins.**

***The wages of sin is death***, according to ***Romans 6:23***, and when we receive God's forgiveness, we are no longer attached to our sins.

This truth is emphasized a number of ways in the Scriptures, and one of my favorites is ***Psalm 103:12: "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us."***



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What I really want to emphasize is the word, “**receive.**”

It is implied here, and more plainly taught elsewhere, that our sins have been forgiven, and all that is left is for us to receive what God has provided.

Jesus died for our sins 2,000 years ago, and He is not going to die again.

What the Lord has done to provide for our forgiveness was done on the day of His crucifixion, but it was in the plan of God even before the foundation of the world.

That’s why **Revelation 13:8** calls Him the “**Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.**”

The Holy Spirit works in our present time to convict, convince, and convert, but we do not have to beg Him to come and do those things, because those things are the will of God.

The thing that is necessary on our part, is that we understand the gospel to the point that we can place our faith in Christ, and in so doing we “receive” the forgiveness of sins.

Now, this may sound strange to you, but it is not the particular sin of lying, murdering, committing adultery, or any other bad thing that you can think of, that will cause people to go to hell.

It is the fact that they are sinners, and it is the failure to believe on Christ, thereby receiving the forgiveness of sins.

When the Holy Spirit moves into a person’s life, that person will begin to become painfully aware of sinful things in his life.

I say begin to become aware, because it is progressive.

**Philippians 1:6** says, “**Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of the Lord Jesus.**”

This means that there is a progressive work of God going on in our lives.

It progresses as your understanding of the word of God increases, causing you to experience spiritual growth in your life.



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**5. That they might receive an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Jesus.**

Again, there's that word, "receive," and this time it is referring to an inheritance.

It is an inheritance of eternal life, which ultimately results in our going to heaven, but it has some wonderful "here and now" benefits as well.

For one thing, you get security in this inheritance.

***Ephesians 4:30* says, "And grieve not the Holy Spirit, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption."**

Your spirit has been birthed by God's Spirit, and your spirit is as redeemed as it will ever be; but, your soul, that is your mind, will, and emotions are in the process of experiencing the completeness of redemption, as you experience spiritual growth.

Your body will not experience the completeness of redemption until the resurrection.

But, bless God, we are sealed by the Holy Spirit until it all takes place.

There are some other things in the inheritance that are to be received, as well.

In the inheritance, it becomes our legal right to pray and gain audience with Almighty God.

To receive that benefit, we must adhere to certain guidelines, of which I will remind you:

**Stop holding on to any known sin.**

**Forgive anybody that we have anything against.**

**You need to be in a right relationship with our spouse.**

**We must always pray in faith.**



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It is our inheritance to live in the blessings of Abraham, according to ***Galatians 3:13-14***.

Realizing this, it is very exciting to trace back through the Scriptures and see how Abraham was blessed in all that he did, and how that blessing was passed on through the years to finally and fully rest upon Christ; and, the Bible teaches that we are in Him, and He is in us.

This inheritance has already been provided, and it is ours for the receiving.

Many people are lost today because they have never received the forgiveness of sins.

Many people have not, because they have not asked, because they haven't received the privilege of effective prayer.

Many people are living in a miserable and defeated existence, because they have not received their rightful, legal position of being Abraham's seed.

This inheritance is for those who are sanctified by faith in Jesus.

To be sanctified is to be set apart.

Through your faith in Jesus, the Holy Spirit sets you apart from the bondage of sin, and He sets you apart to serve the true and living God.

So, all of that brings us to life's most important question, have you sincerely placed your faith in Jesus?