

## **THE FIRST LESSON**

Acts 26:9-21

Paul said to King Agrippa, "Indeed, I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things against the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And that is what I did in Jerusalem; with authority received from the chief priests, I not only locked up many of the saints in prison, but I also cast my vote against them when they were being condemned to death. By punishing them often in all the synagogues I tried to force them to blaspheme; and since I was so furiously enraged at them, I pursued them even to foreign cities. "

"With this in mind, I was traveling to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, when at midday along the road, your Excellency, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and my companions. 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 hurts you to kick against the goads.' I asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' The Lord answered, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. But get up and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you to serve and testify to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you. I will rescue you from your people and from the Gentiles-- to whom I am sending you to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.' "After that, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout the countryside of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God and do deeds consistent with repentance. For this reason the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me."

*The Word of the Lord.*

Psalm 67                *Said in unison*

- 1 May God be merciful to us and bless us, \*  
    show us the light of his countenance and come to us.
- 2 Let your ways be known upon earth, \*  
    your saving health among all nations.
- 3 Let the peoples praise you, O God; \*  
    let all the peoples praise you.
- 4 Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, \*  
    for you judge the peoples with equity  
    and guide all the nations upon earth.
- 5 Let the peoples praise you, O God; \*  
    let all the peoples praise you.
- 6 The earth has brought forth her increase; \*  
    may God, our own God, give us his blessing.
- 7 May God give us his blessing, \*  
    and may all the ends of the earth stand in awe of him.