

Acts 9

Acts 9.1-9

V1 – Where has Saul been mentioned twice already?

-Acts 7.58 – at the stoning of Stephen

-Acts 8.1-3 – as a persecutor of the church

-What does this third mention of him tell us about Saul? He was determined – he was dedicated completely to his conscience and doing what he thought was right

V2 – His request? For letters from the high priest in Jerusalem to take to the synagogues at Damascus for permission to take Christians bound back to Jerusalem for punishment

-The Romans gave the Sanhedrin power over Jews in foreign cities

-The Way – See Acts 19.9, 23

-Acts 22.4

-Acts 24.14, 22

-John 14.2

V3 – He was near Damascus

-It was a long way from Jerusalem to Damascus – about 200 miles, a journey that took at least 6 days

-What does this tell us about the Christian faith? It was spreading very rapidly

-What do you think Saul thought about on this journey? Maybe about the death of Stephen

V4 – The significance? To persecute a Christian is to persecute Christ (*Matt. 25.31-46*)

V5 – The answer of Jesus? I am Jesus whom you are persecuting

V6 – The command of Jesus at this point? Go into the city of Damascus and it will tell you what you must do

-Notice that Paul was not saved just by having a miraculous experience, as many of our Pentecostal friends want us to believe

V7 – The reaction of the men with Paul? Very confused

V8 – What caused his blindness? Maybe Christ gave him blindness, or some have suggested it was because of the bright light

-What change had taken place in Saul? He left Jerusalem with the goal of persecuting Christians, and now he was blind and was being led by the hand into Damascus

"Man proposes, God disposes"

V9 – How long was he blind (and without food and water)? Three days

Acts 9.10-19a

V10 – Have we come across the name Ananias before in the book of Acts? Ananias and Sapphira and also later we meet Ananias the high priest (*Acts 23.2*)

V 11-12 – **Instructions to Ananias?** Go find Saul

-Notice that Saul was praying – this shows that we don't just "pray through" to be saved, as most evangelical denominations teach

V 13 – **Reply from Ananias?** He was afraid of this man named Saul

V 14 – **Why?** He had the authority to bind all Christians

V 15 – **God's plan for Paul?** To preach to the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel

-**Were they carried out?** Yes, in the remaining chapters of *Acts*

V 16 – **Did Paul suffer?** Read **2 Cor. 11.23-28**

V 17 – **Brother?** They were both Jews – Saul was not a Christian yet

-**How do we know that he was a Jew?** Saul was a Jewish name

V 18-19a – **What did Paul do when he was given the message from Ananias?** His blindness ended, and he got up and was baptized

-Notice that he did not wait to the first of the next month to be baptized (as many groups do)

-**Why did he want to be baptized immediately?** To receive the forgiveness of his sins

Acts 9.19b-25

V 19b – **How did he spend his first few days as a Christian?** With the other Christians in Damascus

V 20 – **Where did Paul first preach the gospel?** In the synagogues in Damascus (a very brave man)

V 21 – **The reaction of the people?** They were amazed that this was the same man who was known for persecuting Christians

V 22 – Notice: "Proving" that Jesus was the Christ

-**The great lesson here?** We cannot just say that we believe in Jesus because we want to, but we need to know the reasons for our belief

V 23 – **The reaction of the Jews in Damascus?** They wanted to kill Paul

-**Why?** They probably considered him a traitor and a threat to their beliefs (just as Stephen had been a threat to the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem)

V 24-25 – **How was he helped to escape from Damascus before they could kill him?** The

Christians in Damascus let him down through a window in the wall of Damascus in a large basket
For a parallel account, read: **Read 2 Corinthians 11.32-33**

Acts 9.26-31

V 26 – **The reaction of the Christians in Jerusalem?** They were afraid of Paul

V 27 – Where did we see Barnabas before now? *Acts 4.36-37* – He had donated land to the church
-Barnabas was from Cyprus (near Tarsus)
-**How did Barnabas help Paul?** Introduced him to the apostles and spoke to them of how Paul had preached boldly in Damascus

V 28 – How did Paul spend his time in Jerusalem? Moving about freely and preaching the gospel of Christ

V 29 – Why were the Hellenistic Jews trying to kill Paul? They spoke Greek, as did Paul – again they saw him as a traitor

V 30 – What did the brethren do to save Paul from being killed? Sent him off to Tarsus

V 31 – What happened to the church in Judea and Galilee and Samaria? A time of peace, and the church continued to grow
-There were no divisions in the church – a good thing
-**Read Proverbs 6.16-19** – 7 things that God hates
-**Read Romans 16.17** – Mark those who cause dissensions (they should be disfellowshipped)
-**What was the cause of peace at this time?** Paul had been removed as a persecutor

Acts 9.32-35

Brief review of the life of Peter:

- Matt. 14.25-31* – Walking on water
- John 13.37-38* – prophecy about his denial
- John 18.16-18, 25-27* – The denial
- John 21.15-23* – Rebuke by Jesus
- Acts 2* – Preached the first gospel sermon
- Acts 4.19* – Defended Christ before the Sanhedrin
- How had Peter changed?** He had become much braver in defending the gospel

V 32 – Locate Lydda – Between Jerusalem and Joppa
-**Why "down"?** Again because of the drop in elevation, not in terms of north-south-east-west
-Notice that the state of Maine is often called "down east"

V 33 – Aeneas – Greek or Jewish? Greek – survivor of Troy (*Aenead* and the *Iliad* also)
-**Evidence of Luke writing here?** Facts about the man

V 34 – Anything unusual about Peter's words here? Glory to Christ, not Peter – not like the Billy Graham Evangelistic Crusade, or Oral Roberts University
-Remember the hymn: *To God Be the Glory*
-**Reminiscent of anything in Jesus' life?** *Mark 2.1-11* – The man was let down through the roof

V 35 – Sharon – a valley 30 miles long from Caesarea to Joppa – the spread of the Gospel to semi-Gentile lands

Acts 9.36-43

V 36 - A disciple

- What other woman convert have we had so far?** Sapphira (who was killed for lying to Peter and the Holy Spirit)
- Meaning of Dorcas?** Gazelle
- Married?** Not known, but possibly a widow (See v 39)
- Her deeds in Joppa?** Kindness and charity

V 37 – **Why a washing of the body?** Jewish ritual

- Upper room?** A Jewish custom

V 38 – Two men begged Peter to come

V 39 – **Specific good deeds of Dorcas?** Clothes she had made

- The widows showed Peter all the things Dorcas had done

V 40 – Peter vs. Moses

- How did Moses get water from the rock?** Struck it
- How did Peter perform this miracle?** Knelt and prayed
- This event was very similar to the miracle Jesus performed:
 - Mark 5.41* – The raising of Jarius' daughter (Tabitha)
 - Also the raising of Lazarus (*John 11.26-44*)
 - Also the raising of the widow of Nain's son (*Luke 7.11-15*)
- What do we learn about Peter from these events?** Peter was a good student – he followed the example of his teacher

V 41 – Jesus took the hand of Jarius' daughter – Peter took the hand of Dorcas

- Can't widows also be saints?** Of course
- What was the purpose of First Century miracles?**
 - Mark 16.20* – To confirm the word
 - Heb. 2.2-4* – The word was confirmed

V 42 – The Word continued to spread

V 43 – **Why did Peter stay at Joppa (today a suburb of Tel Aviv)?** It was a seacoast town, and

- Peter was a fisherman
- Significance of staying with a tanner?** It was against all Jewish traditions
 - Also, very smelly
- Jews generally didn't touch dead animals
- This was all to prepare Peter for *Acts 10* – taking the gospel to the Gentiles

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