

- A Study in Acts -

Chapter Nine – The Conversion of Saul

ACTS 9:10-18:

In our last lesson, we left Saul (also called Paul – Acts 13:9) in Damascus blind and fasting, after his encounter with the Lord. Saul has followed the Lord's instruction (a novel concept, to simply obey the instructions given, without question, or doubt???), and he is waiting to be told what the Lord wants him to do (Vs. 6).

Luke will now illustrate the bringing together of preacher and sinner!



Text #1:

Acts 9:10-12 “Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, “Ananias.”

And he said, “Here I am, Lord.”

¹¹ So the Lord *said* to him, “Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for *one* called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying. ¹² And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting *his* hand on him, so that he might receive his sight.””

Ananias: Luke uses the Greek rendering of his Hebrew name (Heb. “*Hananyah*” – ‘Jehovah has been gracious’), to introduce him to Theophilus; as well as the fact that he is a disciple of Christ. We will learn later from Saul that he was devout under the Law and had a good reputation among the Jews (**Acts 22:12**). This is about all that is revealed concerning this Ananias, except that we might add that after the conversion of Saul, that Saul would be introduced to other disciples in Damascus by him (**Vs. 19**).

Street Called Straight: This is uniquely straight forward (get it?); this street is straight, in contrast to the majority of other streets in Damascus; which are mostly narrow and curving. This particular street is very wide and runs virtually straight through the entire city.

Text #2:

Acts 9:13-14 “Then Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name.””

Saul’s charge from the high priests has preceded him in an era that did not have the modern-day methods of communication; yet, the saints and Jews of Damascus know well why Saul had been sent.

Saints: As Ananias states to the Lord his knowledge of the purpose of Saul’s travel to Damascus, he reveals to you and me the common understanding (by designation), of the nature of all obedient members of the “**Body of Christ**”, by using the term “**saints**”.

The term “**Saint**” is universally understood in God’s word two specific ways. **First**, in the idea of dedication and separation unto God. It is applicable to those who have been separated from the secular unto God in specific holy service. **Second**, in the idea of personal holiness with emphasis on character as per the blueprint of God.

This tells us that universally the “**Body of Christ**” is made up of those who have been called out of the world into a specific service to God in holiness (living as befitting this vocation); as directed by Him.

1 Corinthians 1:2 “To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours”

Ephesians 4:1 “I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called”

Colossians 1:10 “that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God”

Text #3:

Acts 9:15-18 “But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. ¹⁶ For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake.”

¹⁷ And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” ¹⁸ Immediately there fell from his eyes *something* like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized.

Apostle – Chosen Vessel of Mine: I want to insert at this point a reminder that word Apostle in its generic understanding, simply means “one sent”. What will make Saul in coming events an Apostle of Jesus Christ, is the vital understanding that the Lord Himself has selected Saul for the work He is about to send him. Saul would in his own words answer the often-asked question concerning his calling as an Apostle of Christ apart from the others, by stating that it was the Lord’s will – see **1 Corinthians 15:8**. In this passage he also answers the often-asked question as to whether Saul truly did see the Lord (in the flesh to testify concerning His resurrection), to this Saul simply says, “**And last of all He was seen by me also**”.

Things He Must Suffer: It is unique in the modern-day era of the Gospel of prosperity and men preaching that giving oneself to God will take away bills, money worries, and health issues; that Saul is going to be shown that his stewardship would be founded on suffering in the flesh for the glory of God. For a good read concerning the fulfillment of everything the Lord would tell Ananias and reveal to Saul concerning his suffering for His name – Read: **2 Corinthians 11:22-33**. A good read for the truth concerning our individual service to the Lord – see: **1 Peter 2:21-5; 4:12-16**.

Filled with the Holy Spirit: Although Ananias is the one who will reveal to Saul that he would receive a filling with the Holy Spirit, he would not be the vehicle by which it would be bestowed. Like the other Apostles of Jesus Christ, Saul would receive this measure of the Spirit specific to the Apostles of Christ, directly from the Lord Himself.

This is going to be made known to us via the words of Saul as he would defend his Apostleship and work in the Gospel of Christ, note:

Galatians 1:11-12 “But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. ¹² For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

This also reveals what the Spirit of God would achieve through these selected individuals who would receive this measure of the Spirit. This was also the message of the Apostle to the Gentiles (**Romans 11:13**), as he would describe the process of revelation by the Spirit through himself and the others, who had received the similar measure, note:

1 Corinthians 2:10-16 “But God has revealed *them* to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. ¹¹ For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. ¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.

¹³ These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. ¹⁴ But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned. ¹⁵ But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is *rightly* judged by no one. ¹⁶ For “who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?” But we have the mind of Christ.”

And finally, this also puts to rest the strange concept of the preeminence of Apostles (as if one is greater than the others). First, Saul had no misconceptions that his stewardship was as equally important to the Name of the Lord as any other – see **2 Corinthians 11:5**. But more importantly, he and all those who were called to be sent by the Lord Himself were charged with a single purpose, to reveal the Lord to the world and preach His good news among all, to His glory and preeminence.

1 Corinthians 1:26-31 “For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called.* ²⁷ But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; ²⁸ and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, ²⁹ that no flesh should glory in His presence. ³⁰ But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—³¹ that, as it is written, “He who glories, let him glory in the LORD.””