

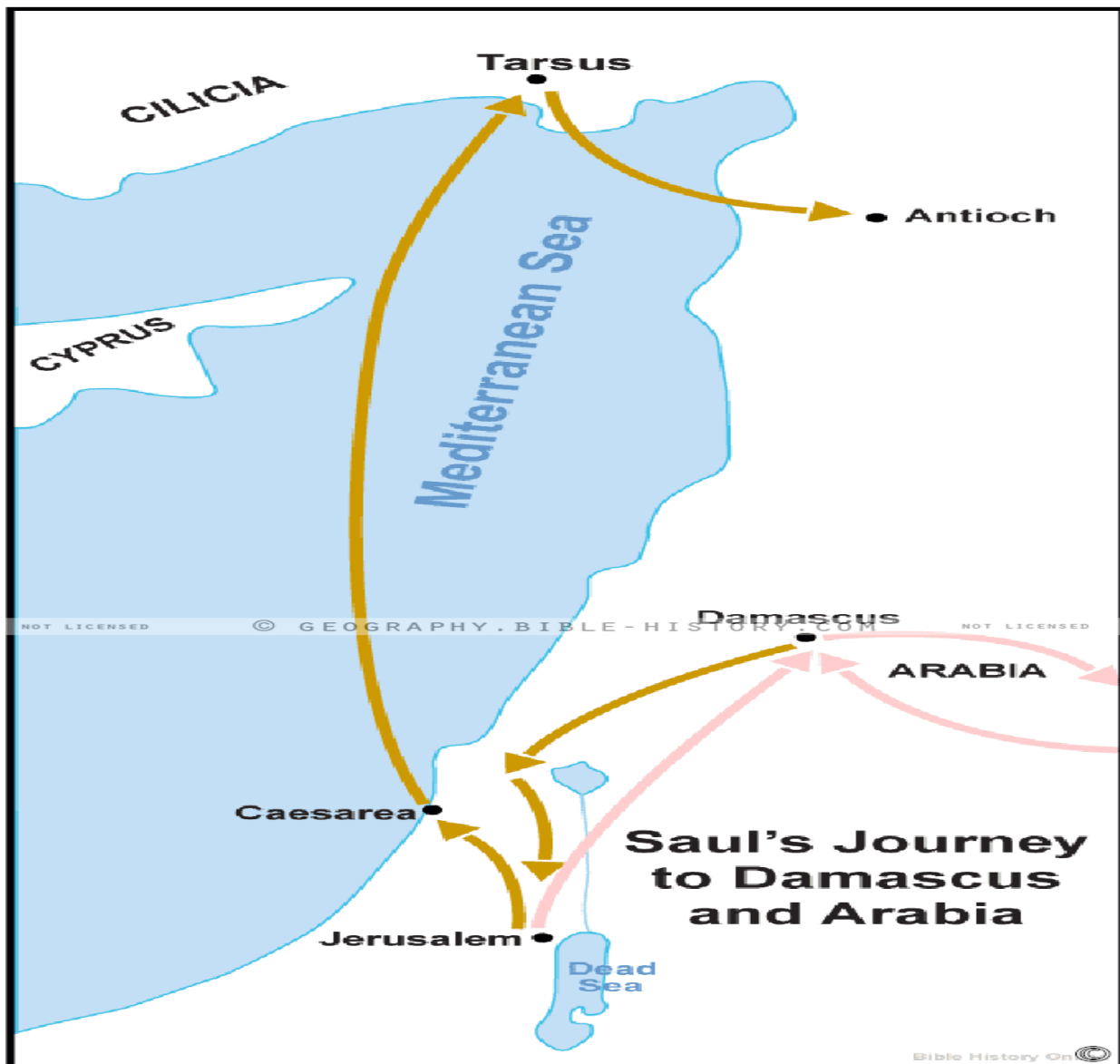
- A Study in Acts -

Chapter Nine – The Conversion of Saul

ACTS 9:19-25:

In our previous lesson, we finished the conversion of Saul of Tarsus (also known as Paul – **13:9**). The Lord has chosen Saul specifically to be an ambassador (minister of reconciliation – **2 Corinthians 5:18-20**), an Apostle (one sent) to Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel (**Acts 9:15**).

We will now see his initial actions, post-conversion, towards the fulfillment of this specific vocation.



**Text #1:**

**Acts 9:19** “So when he had received food, he was strengthened. Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus.”

After Saul’s sight has been returned to him, he by the guidance of Ananias has joined with the disciples here at Antioch (Ananias would probably act as Barnabas – **9:27**, and offer Saul as a brother, instead of the enemy of the disciples of Christ Jesus).

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**Important Note:** It is at this moment that we have to stop and engage in the exercise of rightly dividing the word of truth. Luke, in the recording of events at this junction, does not include some essential information concerning Saul before he records that Saul immediately preaches Jesus as the Christ in the synagogues – **Vs.20** (reasons for the omission are unknown!). However, Saul (Paul), would at a later date fill in this blank and give us the missing information; let us take a look at it!

As Paul would write to the churches of Galatia and extend additional information concerning his vocation as an Apostle of Jesus, he would state emphatically that he did not immediately confer with flesh and blood (which would include immediately preaching Jesus as Christ), and then explained that he went somewhere between **Vs. 19** and **Vs. 20** of our text (it is important to make a note of this in your Bibles as a reference of these events between these verses), in order to receive the revelation of Jesus Christ directly from the Lord, note:

**Galatians 1:11-17** “But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. <sup>12</sup>For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but *it came* through the revelation of Jesus Christ.

<sup>13</sup>For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and *tried to destroy it*. <sup>14</sup>And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

<sup>15</sup>But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb and called *me* through His grace, <sup>16</sup>to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, <sup>17</sup>nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those *who were* apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.”

**First** – We need to note that Saul’s journey began in Jerusalem, where he received warrants to go to Damascus and arrest Christians (**Acts 9:1-2**).

**Second** – On the road to Damascus, the Lord appeared to him and gave him instructions (**Acts 9: 3-9; Galatians 1:15-16**).

**Third** – After the Lord appeared to Ananias as well; Saul came to Damascus and coming together with Ananias, his conversion and healing would be complete (**Acts 9:11-18**).

**Fourth** – We learn that between **Vs.19** and **Vs. 20** of our text, Saul went to Arabia – **Galatians 1:17** (the region directly east of the city of Damascus, virtually uninhabited).

Saul's explanation for this in his message to the Galatians was that the revelation of Jesus Christ had come to him from the Lord there, and not from any other man, nor did he go and teach it till he fully received it from the Lord.

**Fifth** – We learn that he returned back to Damascus, which would be prior to **Vs.20**, where Luke then records that he would preach immediately in the synagogues of Damascus.

**Sixth** – We additionally learn that when he will finally return to Jerusalem (**Acts 9:26; Galatians 1:18**), it would be three years after he left Jerusalem to go to Damascus.

So, all the events of **Acts 9:1-25** will take place over the duration of three years! This is a good exercise in rightly dividing the word (taking all revealed information to develop a complete view of the events recorded).

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**Text #2:**

**Acts 9:20-22** “Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.

<sup>21</sup> Then all who heard were amazed, and said, “Is this not he who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem, and has come here for that purpose, so that he might bring them bound to the chief priests?”

<sup>22</sup> But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this *Jesus* is the Christ.”

Saul's preaching of Jesus in the synagogues that he was actually sent to present the warrants to arrest all those who wear the name of Him whom now Saul is preaching has sent these listeners into amazement, and as he grew in boldness (strength in the Lord), he confounded them even further. Since they are not going to be able to refute his words, the following verses will record the usual tactic the Jews would take; they will plot to kill Saul!

**Text #3:**

**Acts 9:23-25** “Now after many days were past, the Jews plotted to kill him. <sup>24</sup> But their plot became known to Saul. And they watched the gates day and night, to kill him. <sup>25</sup> Then the disciples took him by night and let *him* down through the wall in a large basket.”

This is something that Saul would also speak of in his own words, note:

**2 Corinthians 11:32-33** “In Damascus the governor, under Aretas the king, was guarding the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desiring to arrest me; <sup>33</sup> but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped from his hands.”

**Aretas:** He is recorded in history as the king of Arabia (the province of Syria that includes Damascus and the area to the east of Damascus that Saul went to before preaching Jesus – *Josephus, Book of Antiquities, Book 18, Chapter 5*).

We also see a common pattern of the Jews, which shows their far-reaching influence in local politics, in that they were able to enlist the local authorities to aid them in their efforts to attempt to stop Saul from preaching.

**Let us review this first journey of Saul of Tarsus, thus far:**

He received warrants to arrest Christians in Damascus from the high priest in Jerusalem (**Acts 9:1-2**).

From Jerusalem, he travels towards Damascus and during this journey the Lord appeared to him, gave him instruction, and caused him to be blind (**Acts 9:3-9; Galatians 1:15-16**).

Saul was taken to Damascus, to the house of Judas. The Lord appeared to Ananias and commanded him to go to Saul. They were brought together, and Saul’s conversion was completed, and his sight returned to him. He was introduced to the brethren in Damascus (**Acts 9:11-19**).

Saul then went into Arabia (the area east of Damascus), for a time to receive the revelation of Jesus Christ directly from the Lord (**Galatians 1:11-17**).

He then returned to Damascus and began to preach Jesus as the Christ in the synagogues of Damascus; amazing and confounding the Jews who knew the reason the high priest had sent him there (**Acts 9:20-22**).

Finally, at the end of three years-time (**Galatians 1:18**), and because of a plot by the Jews to kill Saul; he is going to have to flee Damascus in secret (**Acts 9:23-25**).