

The Book of Acts

Chapter 9

Growth of the New Testament Church

Quiz

2

- Who did God say was “consenting unto Stephen’s death”?
 - Saul. He agreed and applauded it.
- What does it mean that Saul “made havock of the church”?
 - to treat shamefully or with injury, to ravage, devastate, or ruin
- Where did Philip preach and see a great revival?
 - Samaria
- Who was the wizard in Samaria that believed on Christ?
 - Simon

Quiz

3

- What two men went from Jerusalem to Samaria to aid Philip?
 - Peter and John
- What did Simon ask Peter to give him?
 - The power to fill others with the Holy Spirit
- Who did Philip meet in the desert?
 - The Ethiopian eunuch
- What book and chapter was the Ethiopian reading?
 - Isaiah 53

Saul the Persecutor, v.1-2

4

- Saul was the Hebrew name, Paul was his Roman name.
- Saul's hatred for Christians was still steaming out threats and murder.
- He went to the high priest for letters of permission to go to Damascus to capture Christians, v.2.
- "This way" was a name for believers in Christ.
- Saul was after both men and women Christians.

Roads in Israel

1st Century A.D.



5

Wednesday, 3 April 2019

Perhaps the most ancient, and certainly one of the most beautiful, cities, as seen from without, in the world. It was a well known town in the time of Abraham. Lying in the great route of commerce between Egypt, Persia, and India, a green oasis in a desert of sand, watered by the plentiful streams of the Abana or Barada, it was celebrated for its commercial wealth and for the magnificence of its gardens. ... It stands about a hundred and forty miles northeast from Jerusalem. ^{Whedon}

Reputed to be one of the oldest continually occupied cities in the world (Gen 15:12). Located east of snow-capped Mount Hermon, Damascus is a garden spot of beauty and fertility. ^{Dunagan}

Evidently, many Jews had already become Christians there.

Damascus

6

Saul and the Bright Light, v.3-6

7

- Near Damascus, God shined a light on Saul, v.3
- Saul fell to the earth for fear of the bright light. He heard Jesus talk to him, v.4
- Note Saul's response in v.5. He saw and talked with the Lord.
 - Saul had been kicking against God's pricks (goads).
 - Evidently, the Holy Spirit had been goading Saul's heart for some time.
- Saul, trembling and terrified, asked what he should do, v.6
 - Jesus answered, "Arise and go into the city" and he would be told.
 - God had finally gotten Saul's attention and he humbled himself.

Saul was Blind Three Days, v.7-9

8

- Saul's companions heard a voice but saw no man, v.7
 - They heard a sound but no spoken words (Ac 22:9).
- When Saul got up, he was blind and his friends led him, v.8
- Saul spent three days in blindness.
 - During that time he did not eat or drink anything, v.9

God spoke to Ananias, v.10-16

9

- Ananias was a disciple of Christ and God spoke to him, v.10
- God told Ananias to go visit Saul, v.11-12
- Ananias voiced his concerns to the Lord, v.13-14
 - News of Saul's plans had travelled quickly.
 - The Christians were likely in a state of fearful anticipation.
- God calmed Ananias' fears and revealed His plans.
 - Saul is a chosen vessel unto God.
 - He will bear Christ's name to the Gentiles, kings, and Israel
 - He will suffer great things for Christ's name.

In Acts 9:16, Christ said He would show Saul how much he must suffer for Christ's name. The word translated "must" is a word that means necessary. God did not say this was punishment for Saul's acts of persecution, but truly, Paul suffered much for the Lord (Acts 20:22-23; 2 Corinthians 6:4-10; 11:23-27; 2 Timothy 1:11-12).

JFB Commentary states, "Much he has done against that Name; but now, when I show him what great things he must suffer for it, he shall count it his honour and privilege, feeling in himself, by a retribution that will be sweet to him, what he so cruelly made others to feel."

Paul's Suffering

10

Saul was Baptised, v.17-19

11

- Ananias obeyed God, v.17. **Was he fearful? Perhaps!** He put his hands on Saul, called him his brother and told him that Jesus had sent him that he might receive sight and the Holy Spirit.
- Immediately, without delay, God did what He promised, v.18
 - Scales fell from Saul's eyes
 - He could see again
 - He got up and was baptised
- Saul ate and was strengthened
- He then joined with the disciples at Damascus

At conversion, God does a 180° turn around in a person's life!

Saul Began Preaching Christ, v.20-22

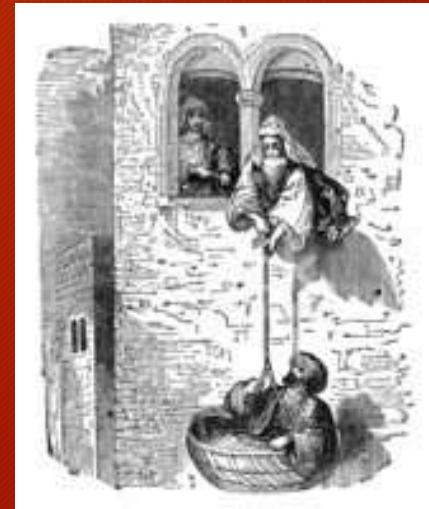
12

- Straightway (i.e., immediately) Saul preached Christ, v.20
 - He preached in the synagogues where he had planned to capture Christians.
 - He preached that Christ **IS** the Son of God, a 180° turn around.
- The people were amazed, v.21
- Saul increased the more in strength (was increased *by God*)
- He confounded (i.e., perplexed) the Jews proving (joining the facts) that is the Christ (Messiah).
 - Saul joined OT predictions with NT facts to show that Jesus was Christ

Saul had to Flee Damascus, v.23-28

13

- After many (i.e., sufficient) days, the Jews plotted to kill Saul, v.23. It was long enough to get them angry.
- Saul learned of their plot and avoided the city gates, v.24
- The disciples let Paul down by night in a basket over the wall, v.25. He fled to Jerusalem, v.26.
- Barnabas introduced Saul to the fearful Christians, v.27. Saul then joined with the Christians, v.28.
 - God used Barnabas to befriend Saul.



Saul had to Flee Jerusalem, v.29-31

14

- Saul spoke boldly of the Lord Jesus. He disputed against (i.e., put questions to) the Grecians, v.29.
 - These were the murderers of Stephen.
 - They made plans to kill Saul.
- The believers took Saul to Caesarea and sent him to Tarsus, v.30
- For a time, the churches in Israel had rest, v.31
 - Note their activity. They did not sit back and relax.
 - They drew closer to God and increased in number.



God used Peter to Heal Aeneas, v.32-35

15

- Peter travelled throughout Israel preaching, v.32
- At Lydda he found paralysed Aeneas, v.33
- Aeneas was healed, v.34
- All the people of both Lydda and Saron turned to the Lord, v.35



Tabitha (Dorcas) died, v.36-38

16

- Tabitha (Dorcas) lived at Joppa, v.36
 - Woman full of good works and almsdeeds (gave to the poor).
 - She was sick and died, v.37
- Christians sent to Lydda (about 18 km away) and asked Peter to come, v.38



God used Peter to Resurrect Dorcas, v.39-43

17

- Peter went to Joppa and was taken to the body, v.39
- He put everyone out, kneeled and prayed, v.40
 - He said to the body, Tabitha, arise.
 - She opened her eyes and sat up.
 - He helped her up, v.41
- News spread throughout Joppa and many believed, v.42
- Peter stayed many days in Joppa with Simon a tanner.
 - Jews considered tanning hides an unclean trade because of contact with dead animals. Thus, his house was by the sea side (Ac 10:6).

Applications for us today

18

- Persecution has been common since the days of Christ and even in the OT.
 - We must not be surprised that unbelievers dislike or mistreat us.
- Saul had been kicking against the pricks or goads of God.
 - When God pricks your heart, do not kick. Yield to His will.
- When God saved Saul, he turned his life around 180°.
 - Has God turned around your life?
- Ananias obeyed God and went to Saul though he may have been fearful.
 - The safest place on earth is in the centre of God's will.
- When Peter sought God to restore Tabitha's life, he got alone, kneeled and prayed.
 - When we face difficult situations, these are the very first things we should do.
 - Get alone, kneel and pray.
 - Never make prayer your **last resort!**