

ACTS 9:1-19: SAUL, HIT-MAN FOR SANHEDRIN-MAFIA, GETS SAVED

The immediate context focuses on the salvation of four individuals: Simon among the Samaritans, a charlatan leader in the occult (ch. 8a); the Ethiopian Eunuch, a proselyte to perverted Judaism from Africa (ch. 8b); Saul, a radical enemy of Christians (ch. 9); and Cornelius, a Gentile God-fearer (ch. 10). Luke not only inserts these conversions into the larger context, which is the spread of the Gospel from Jerusalem to Rome, he does it with considerable detail. The Holy Spirit wants us to know that the salvation of individuals is most important to Christ and very instructive to us.

For the complete record of Saul's conversion, consult his own testimony in Acts 22:4ff and 26:12ff.

9:1-6 The Lord Appears Unto Saul

v. 1 THE MAN: Saul, same person in 7:58 & 8:1 persecuting Christians. In his own words (Philippians 3:5-6), he was:

1. "circumcised the 8th day," i.e. a Jew from day one; not a convert;
2. "of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews;" i.e., both parents were Hebrews, a racial purity;
3. "a Pharisee," zealous for & devoted to the Mosaic Law;
4. "a zealot, persecuting the church," i.e., "I sought out and persecuted Christians whom I considered heretics."
5. RELIGIOUS & SINCERE, BUT LOST!

HIS ATTITUDE: "**breathing out threatenings and slaughter**": the word is φονος / phonos meaning "homicide," "murder."

v. 2 HIS DETERMINATION: "he desired" (Aorist Middle Indic.) of the High Priest letters that demanded the arrest and extradition of any Jewish-Christians who had fled to Damascus.

Saul conducted a personal vendetta against Christians, a one man campaign of repression in Jerusalem and beyond. See his own words on this Acts 26:9-11.

Note 3 things:

1. Jewish-Christian-believers had reached Damascus and word had gotten back to Jerusalem (time / distance involved).
2. They still clung to the synagogues.
3. They were perceived as being "of THE WAY:" i.e., the Way of Christ, John 14:6. Same in 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22. A modern cult has taken this name.

v. 3-6 THE LORD'S INTERVENTION: Saul really did see the Lord Jesus!

- see v. 17 "the Lord Jesus appeared to him;" v. 27 "he had seen the Lord"
- 22:6 says it was about noon; 26:13 "above the brightness of the sun"
- "**Saul, Saul**" — 26:14 says Jesus spoke in Hebrew to Saul

(OVER)

- **"I myself am Jesus" (v. 5)** - emphatic: Paul saw the resurrected Christ: this fulfills one condition required for Apostleship (in the strict sense of the word). See Acts 22:14; 26:14,15; I Cor. 9:1; 15:8 for reaffirmations of this fact.
- **"whom you are persecuting:"** believers are so closely identified in living - union with Christ that to persecute them is to persecute Him!
- **"it is hard for you to kick against the goads. And he said, "Lord, what will you have me to do?"**
These two clauses are not found in any Greek manuscript, hence omitted in NASV & NIV: however, the 1st is found in 26:14 & the 2nd in 22:10.

Paul's conscience goaded him about the murder of Stephen, about his own vicious persecution of Christians, about the truth of the Gospel, though outwardly, one would not know it.

9:7-19 Saul Commissioned & Baptized

- v. **7-9** Blinded by the brilliance emanating from Christ, Saul is led by his cohorts into Damascus (to the home of a man named Judas, v. 11).
- v. **10-12** The Lord goes before and prepares Ananias to meet Saul. Perhaps Ananias was a leader of Believers in Damascus.
- v. **13** Ananias had heard of Saul! No doubt! What a reputation. Believers are called "saints"!
- v. **15, 16** The Lord's prophecies & advanced "press releases" on Saul:
 1. "He is a chosen vessel unto me." ALL BY GRACE.
 2. "To bear my name before nations, kings, Israelites." MISSION
 3. "He must suffer great things for my Name." SUFFERING
- v. **17** The Head of the Church continues to direct his work: "Jesus...has sent me," says Ananias.
- v. **18, 19** Note the order of the verbal actions (all Aorist tenses): 1) the scales fall from his eyes; 2) he saw again 3) rising-up, he was baptized most likely by Ananias; 4) and taking food, he was strengthened.

HE HAD NOT EATEN FOR 3 DAYS, YET HE REFUSED FOOD UNTIL AFTER HE WAS BAPTIZED!

WHAT HAPPENED TO SAUL? Answer: on the road to Damascus, the resurrected Christ appeared to this man resulting in his instant regeneration. From persecution of Christ, he became His most prominent propagator. From the Devil's mailman, he became Christ's most zealous missionary. Saul becomes the Apostle Paul, the most influential man in Western Civilization, and as such, one of the greatest proofs of the reality of true Christianity. HOW DO THE LIBERAL THEOLOGIANS EXPLAIN PAUL!?!

"And Straight way he preached Christ in the synagogues," v. 20
[to be continued]