

CONVERSION OF SAUL ACTS 9

Intro. Chapter 8 begins with the words, “And Saul. . .” Chapter 9 starts with those same words. Saul of Tarsus first comes on the scene when Stephen was stoned (7:58). Then 8:1... Luke resumes his account of the conduct of Saul which he began in 8:3. This is still Saul’s attitude when he comes into view again (26:9-11). The spread of Christianity did not discourage Saul.

Chapter 9 of the book of Acts will cover the conversion of Saul, his beginning to preach, Barnabas standing up for him, Peter performing miracles and Dorcas being raised from the dead.

I. Conversion of Saul. (9:1-19).

A. His persecuting.

- Breathing out threatenings and slaughter.
 - “Breathing” deep, agitating emotion.
 - Every time he took a breath it seems that new threats against the followers of Christ were uttered.
 - “Slaughter” he intensely desired to put to death as many Christians as possible, thinking that in doing this he was doing God a service.
- He was not content to persecute only the believers in Judea, thus he secured a warrant from the high priest to take to the synagogues at Damascus, so he can apprehend those of “the Way” and bring them bound to Jerusalem.
- “This way”
 - Designation for Christianity.
 - Used frequently to refer to followers of Christ (Acts 19:9; 22:4; 24:14,22)
 - May have come from John 14:6, or Matt. 7:13f; Heb. 10:20)
- His life is about to make a dramatic change.

B. Heavenly Vision (9:3-9).

- We learn from Paul’s two accounts of this event that it was at midday and that the light was above the brightness of the sun (Acts 22:6; 26:13).
- Voice he heard was in the Hebrew language (26:14).
- Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?*
 - Whatever we do to a disciple, we do to the Lord.
 - Saul had nothing personally against the disciples, he was against what they taught.
- Who art thou Lord?*
 - Knew he was addressing a heavenly being.
 - Did not know who.
- Lord said, *I am Jesus.*
- Jesus revealed himself to Paul.
- By persecuting Christians, he was persecuting Christ.

C. *What would you have me do?*

- Compare this attitude with verse 1.
- Go into the city and you will be told what you must do.
- Jesus did not appear to Saul to make him a Christian, but to qualify him to serve as an apostles (Acts 26:16-18). He must learn what to do to be saved from humans teaching him.

D. Ananias (9:10-19).

- He is told to go find Saul.
- I have heard about him. He was very like coming after Ananias.
- The Lord said “Go!”
- Purpose for choosing Saul.
- Saul was baptized (v18). . .(Acts 22:16)

II. The Preaching of Paul (9:20-31)

- A. Straightway he preached Christ (v.20).
- B. Reaction of the hearers.
 - 1. Amazed—total change.
 - 2. Confounded—can mean bested, or “tumult”, “excitement.”
 - a. Similar to reaction to Stephen’s preaching.
 - b. Unable to meet his arguments, they rose up against him.
 - 3. Proving that this is very Christ.
 - 4. After many days...after his stay in Arabia and his return to Damascus (Gal. 1:17,18).
- C. Took Counsel to kill him (v.24).
- D. The disciples were afraid of him (v.26).
- E. Barnabas stood up for him (v.27)
- F. Church had rest (v.31).

III. Peter and Miracles.

- A. Miracle at Lydda (9:32-35).
 - 1. Healed Aeneas.
 - 2. Made no claim for self.
 - 3. Immediately...
 - 4. “All” turned to the Lord.
- B. Miracle at Joppa (9:36-43)
 - 1. Tabitha (Aramaic) or Dorcas (Greek)
 - 2. Name meant, “antelope, gazelle.”
 - 3. Life characterized by acts of kindness and charity.
 - 4. She died and was prepared for burial.
 - 5. Sent men to Lydda to bring Peter.
 - 6. They showed Peter some of the things she had made.
 - 7. Peter raised her from the dead.
 - 8. Became known throughout Joppa.
- C. A certain tanner...
 - 1. Tanner is someone who converts hides into leather.
 - 2. He runs a high risk of being ceremonially defiled because he deals with carcasses, etc..
 - 3. The strict Jews would have nothing to do with this occupation, or those involved.
 - 4. If a tanner, about to marry, kept his trade a secret from his fiancé till after they were married, the contract of marriage was automatically voided.
 - 5. Since the house of a tanner was so repulsive to the strict Jew, it may be that Peter is already gradually getting away from the old Jewish prejudices.
 - 6. Help to prepare him for what is about to occur in Acts 10.

Con: The conversion of Saul, his beginning to preach, Barnabas standing up for him, Peter performing miracles and Dorcas being raised from the dead. It begins with the conversion of the greatest enemy of Christianity at that time, and ends with a great servant of God being raised from the dead. If you obey the gospel, as Saul did, you can be raised spiritually from the dead (Eph. 2:1)(Rom. 6).