

Welcome to: - Bible House of Grace.



God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

Acts 9.

(2013).

The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

Teach it, don't demand it.

Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man. As to such I neither claim special knowledge or perfect understanding.

If you think items presented on this site to be in error, please let me know and I will gladly reconsider the content.

Acts 9.

Topics.

- Saul travels to Damascus and hears the voice of Jesus.
- Jesus asks Saul, "Why are you persecuting me?"
- The Lord tells Ananias to go to Saul.
- Saul teaches Jesus is the Son of God in the synagogues of Damascus.
- Saul confounds the Jews by proving Jesus is the Christ
- Hellenists seek to murder Paul in Jerusalem.
- Peter heals a man who had been bedridden eight years.
- Peter raises Tabitha from the dead.

The Previous Chapter: in the previous chapter Saul was entering house after house dragging off men and women who confessed Christ and committing them to prison and doing all he could to destroy the church. Philip went to Samaria, healed many and preached Jesus, Peter and John came to Phillip to impart the gift of the Holy Spirit then left Philip and returned to Jerusalem. Philip after explaining Isaiah to an Ethiopian eunuch water baptised him and then was carried by the Spirit to Azotus where he began preaching the Gospel to all towns until he arrived in Caesarea.

NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

Paul travels to Damascus and hears the voice of Jesus.

Acts 9:1-9 ----- ¹But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest ²and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. ³Now as he (Paul) went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴And falling to the ground he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" ⁵And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" And he said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. ⁶But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do." ⁷The men who were travelling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. ⁸Saul rose from the ground, and although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. So they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. ⁹And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

Damascus: was a major oasis city in Samaria, for more than four thousand years it has been the capital of one government after another, a prize for which nation after nation went to war, a city whose boast for centuries has been, "The World Began at Damascus, and the World will End there."

Luke in the previous chapter told us that, "Saul ravaged the church and entered house after house dragging men and women out and committing them to prison" (Acts 8:3). Ravaged carries the idea that he not only spoke evil of those who confessed the Lord Jesus Christ but also aggressively set about assaulting and abusing whoever believed in the Lord violently doing whatever he could to destroy and break up the church.

Now Luke writes, "Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem" (Acts 9:1-2).

Saul wanted the High priest to give him letters that when he presented them to the priests at Damascus they would give him permission to drag men and women confessing Christ out of the their synagogues so that he could take them captive to Jerusalem.

Throughout the years I have heard people state that they are the worst sinner of all time and therefore believe God could not save them, all they have to do is look at the life of Paul prior to his conversion and ask themselves, "Have I broken up Christian families and put innocent men and women into prison simply because they were devoted to Christ as Paul did,? And then look at what God was able to do with Paul's life.

Jesus asks Saul, "Why are you persecuting me?"

Paul was on his way to Damascus, with the letters from the high priest giving him permission to drag men and women out of the synagogues in the city of Damascus (v14) when he is suddenly blinded by a light from heaven that causes him to fall to the ground, he then hears Jesus voice asking him, "Why is he persecuting him?"

NOTICE.

Doing harm to brothers and sisters in Christ is the same as doing harm to Christ himself. This is not a vision since all the men heard the voice, but no-one sees Christ, nevertheless the event is so stunning the men are left speechless and Paul is left without sight for three days in Damascus.

The Lord tells Ananias to go to Saul.

Acts 9:10-18 ----- ¹⁰Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord." ¹¹And the Lord said to him, "Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, ¹²and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight." ¹³But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem. ¹⁴And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name." ¹⁵But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. ¹⁶For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name." ¹⁷So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." ¹⁸And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptised;

Ananias a disciple living in Damascus in a vision hears the Lord tell him, "To go to the house of Judas and look for Saul," Who has also had vision in which he has seen Ananias laying hands on him and healing his sight. Of course Ananias knowing the evil Saul has done to those who confess Christ is terrified to go anywhere near him. Nevertheless the Lord tells Ananias that he has chosen Paul to take the Good News of the Gospel to the Gentiles, to kings and to the children of Israel. Ananias goes to Saul lays his hands on him and not only does Paul regains his sight he is filled with the Holy Spirit and is water baptised into the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

NOTE: the use of the words, "Children of Israel" refer to the common people of Israel contrasted to the prideful, hypocritical Jewish religious leaders who were full of selfish ambition.

Saul teaches Jesus is the Son of God in the Synagogues of Damascus.

Acts 9:19-25 ----- ¹⁹taking food, he was strengthened. For some days he was with the disciples at Damascus. ²⁰And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God." ²¹And all who heard him were amazed and said, "Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem of those who called upon this name? And has he not come here for this purpose,

to bring them bound before the chief priests?" ²²But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ. ²³When many days had passed, the Jews plotted to kill him, ²⁴but their plot became known to Saul. They were watching the gates day and night in order to kill him, ²⁵but his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket.

Saul hasn't eaten or had a drink for three days (v9) and Luke says after eating some food Saul feels strengthened, when one considers the fact that not only has Saul now eaten but he has his sight back I would suggest Luke is understating how Saul feels, it is more likely Saul is over the moon with joy. His encounter with Christ and the events that followed has totally turned his life in the opposite direction.

Saul confounds the Jews by proving Jesus is the Christ

Saul stays in Damascus with those he came to take captive before the high priest and have thrown into prison. While in Damascus instead of dragging woman and men who confessed Christ out of the synagogue he stands up in them and proclaims Jesus teaching that he is the Christ and the Son of God (v20). The people especially the Jewish authorities of the synagogues are confused because they knew Saul was coming with letters from the high priest that gave him the authority to take anyone confessing Christ captive to Jerusalem to stand before a council of chief priests. The Jews in Damascus were so furious that they hatch a plan to murder him, but with the help of his disciples he escaped.

Hellenists seek to murder Paul in Jerusalem.

Acts 9:26-31 ----- ²⁶And when he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples. And they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple. ²⁷But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and declared to them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who spoke to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus. ²⁸So he went in and out among them at Jerusalem, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord. ²⁹And he spoke and disputed against the Hellenists. But they were seeking to kill him. ³⁰And when the brothers learned this, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus. ³¹So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied.

Hellenists: were non-Greeks who spoke Greek (the KJV has Grecians) (the RSV has Hellenists) it is a term used specially of Jews who made Greek their tongue and with it often adopted Greek ideas and practices (Acts 6:1) (Acts 9:29).

Paul returns to Jerusalem.

Naturally the disciples in Jerusalem being fully aware of Paul's tremendous authority given to him by the high priest and his threats of murder against the disciples of the Lord (v1) are terrified of him so Barnabas who was with Paul when they travelled to Damascus and Christ spoke to him and who had witnessed the miraculous events that followed and heard Paul teach Christ in the synagogues of Damascus takes Paul and introduces him to the apostles at Jerusalem.

Paul goes out and proclaims Christ among the disciples at Jerusalem. Imagine the horror of the Jewish synagogue priests and religious authorities when they see their champion who was sent out to cause havoc on the church and destroy it standing in their own synagogues preaching Christ. They are so filled with fury and anger the Hellenists seek to murder him.

The Disciples of Christ rescue Paul.

To escape the murderous Hellenists the disciples take Paul to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus. The words, "The church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace" (v31) show the enormous havoc Saul caused brothers and sister in Christ throughout the land of Israel.

Paul's Power and Authority.

Since there was no-one in the Jewish priesthood higher in authority than the high priest Paul's authority and power was enormous. To be given letters from the high priest (Acts 9:1-2) that allowed him to destroy whoever was opposed to the Jewish teaching gave him legal authority to use not only Jewish, but also Roman officers and soldiers throughout the land of Israel to do whatever Paul instructed them to do to destroy the opposing faith. This is exactly what Paul was doing until the Lord miraculously turned his life around.

We know this because Luke tells us when Paul left Jerusalem for Tarsus: -

- The church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up and walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied (Acts 9:31).

Clearly showing the widespread havoc and destruction Paul was causing to the Church prior to his conversion.

Tarsus: in Paul's day was a major trading city with a university in Turkey ten miles inland from the coast and the place where Paul was born.

Peter heals a man who had been Bedridden Eight Years.

Acts 9:32-35 ----- ³²Now as Peter went here and there among them all, he came down also to the saints who lived at Lydda. ³³There he found a man named Aeneas, bedridden for eight years, who was paralyzed. ³⁴And Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; rise and make your bed." And immediately he rose. ³⁵And all the residents of Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord.

Healing Authenticates the Apostles.

NOTICE: we are not told that Aeneas had any faith, he didn't even ask Peter to heal him rather Peter saw his plight and out of compassion healed him. This is an era when God's Spirit was flowing through the apostles in such a majestic fashion that they were able to heal as Jesus did simply by speaking the word. They did not need mood music to prepare people to receive something from God as some ministers in churches today do.

It did not matter what the environment was or even what faith or the lack of it those the apostles healed had, they simply spoke and the sick person was stunningly and instantly healed. Remember God through Christ is doing a totally new work and establishing the Good News of the Gospel in Christ.

These people had no Bibles or New Testament Scriptures so God authenticated the apostles teaching by confirming it with miracles that only men with God's Spirit flowing through them could possibly do.

Peter raises Tabitha from the Dead.

Acts 9:36-43 ----- ³⁶Now there was in Joppa a disciple named Tabitha, which, translated, means Dorcas. She was full of good works and acts of charity. ³⁷In those days she became ill and died, and when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room. ³⁸Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men to him, urging him, "Please come to us without delay." ³⁹So Peter rose and went with them. And when he arrived, they took him to the upper room. All the widows stood beside him weeping and showing tunics and other garments that Dorcas made while she was with them. ⁴⁰But Peter put them all outside, and knelt down and prayed; and turning to the body he said, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. ⁴¹And he gave her his hand and raised her up. Then calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. ⁴²And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. ⁴³And he stayed in Joppa for many days with one Simon, a tanner.

Some say that it is our faith that heals us, they say if we are not healed it is because we do not have enough faith to be healed or because we have some gross sin that is blocking God from being able to heal us, this may be true in very rare circumstance, but it is certainly not a true statement in this story and of most other biblical healings.

Tabitha was dead so it was certainly not her faith that healed her thus this glorious miracle is a good example of whose faith it is that heals. Lydda had obviously heard of Peter's ability to heal the sick, so she sends men to get him. Peter put everyone out of the room kneels and prays and simply said, "Tabitha, arise" And she stood up. Lydda faith heal Tabitha in the sense she believed enough in Peter that she sent men to fetch him, but ultimately it was the healing power of God working through Peter's faith that healed the girl.

NOTICE: the words, "And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord" (v42). These people had no mobile phones, printing presses or global TV so God used the amazing wonder of miracles to get people talking throughout the surrounding regions about the apostles, the new faith and the Lord Jesus Christ and many believed.

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