Acts of the Apostles – 9

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A. Paul's Conversion and Early Ministry (*1-31*).
   1. He meets Jesus on Damascus Road (*1-9*).
   2. He is baptized by Ananias (*10-18*).
   3. He preaches Christ in Damascus (*19-25*).
   4. He preaches Christ in Jerusalem (*26-30*).

B. Summary of God's Blessings on Early Church (*31*).

C. Peter's Healing of Aeneas and Dorcas (*32-43*).
   1. Peter heals Aeneas of the palsy (*32-35*).
   2. Peter raises Dorcas from death (*36-43*).

The Sense and Meaning

A. Jesus Christ converts Saul of Tarsus, a zealous and violent persecutor of the saints (Acts 9:1-9).
   1. In the New Testament, especially the gospels and Acts, we must see Jesus of Nazareth.
   2. Do not be confused about Saul and Paul, he was known by both names (Acts 13:9).
   3. A study of this great work of grace must begin with Paul's analysis (I Tim 1:12-17).
      a. The Lord put Paul into the ministry for his faithful zeal, though in ignorance.
      b. The chief of sinners was saved by grace in Christ Jesus, an example of grace.
      c. The longsuffering of God to save such a violent enemy should comfort us all.
      d. Each time we experience Providence or conviction pointing us back to Christ, we should tremble, volunteer, and serve with the same devotion as Saul.
   4. Saul, intent on violence against the followers of Jesus, headed for Damascus (Acts 9:1-2).
      a. We were introduced to Saul as keeping coats at Stephen's stoning (Acts 7:58; 8:1).
      b. He obtained written authority from the high priest to apprehend saints there.
      c. He was not going to Damascus to debate but to arrest and punish (Acts 22:4-5).
   5. But Jesus Christ of Nazareth meets him on the way before he gets to the city (Acts 9:3-7).
      a. Nearing the city of Damascus around noon, a bright light shined around them.
      b. The glory of the light was above the brightness of the sun (Acts 22:11; 26:13).
      c. Saul and his companions saw the light, feared, and fell down (Acts 22:9; 26:14).
      d. Falling down, he hears and recognizes, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"
      e. These words he hears, from no visible source, in the Hebrew tongue (Acts 26:14).
      f. Addressing Him as Lord, Saul asks for His personal Adversary's Identity.
      g. And he learns that Jesus of Nazareth is the One he has been persecuting.

h. And the Lord reminds Saul that it was hard for him to kick against His pricks.
i. “Kick against the pricks” is from the goad used to prick beasts to their work.
j. Men are “pricked” under conviction by God and Scripture (Ps 73:21; Acts 2:37).
k. Trembling, in fear, and astonished, in wonder, he asks how he might serve.
l. Jesus tells him to go into Damascus and wait for his ministerial orders.
m. His friends saw the light and fell down also but stood up in fear (Acts 22:9; 26:14).
n. They heard a voice but did not hear with understanding (John 8:43; 12:28-30).

6. Saul, blinded and frightened by his experience, is led into the city of Damascus (Acts 9:8-9).
   a. When he arose from the ground and opened his eyes, he was blind to all.
   b. His travelling companions led this vicious enemy by the hand into Damascus.
   c. He spends three days blind and fasting from his life-changing experience.
   d. I believe little in here is coincidental – Paul had three days to consider Christ.

B. Jesus Christ sends His disciple Ananias to get Saul ready for his ministerial labors (Acts 9:10-18).
   1. Visions being common in those days, the Lord solicits the services of Ananias (Acts 2:17).
   2. The Lord gives Ananias precise directions to find this frightful enemy Saul of Tarsus.
   3. But the Lord comforts him with the fact that this man was now praying – behold.
      a. True conversion, repentance, and spirituality are indicated by our prayer life.
      b. Men who meet Jesus Christ and desire to repent and serve do so in prayer.
      c. Consider Isaiah (Is 6:1-8), Daniel (Dan 9:1-23), and a woman (Luke 7:37-38).
   4. And the Lord comforts him further that Saul had seen Ananias already in a vision.
   5. And the Lord comforts him further that Saul of Tarsus was blind and needed sight.
   6. But Ananias in cautious prudence reminds the Lord of Saul’s horrible reputation.
   7. Graciously, the Lord directs Ananias to go with the knowledge of Saul’s future.
   8. Ananias goes as commanded and follows up by Name from the Damascus Road.
   9. He lays hands on him, restores his sight, gives the Spirit, and baptizes him (Acts 22:16).

C. He stays at Damascus with the saints and preaches Jesus Christ the Son of God (Acts 9:19-25).
   1. Because of his three days of fasting, he needed refreshment to restore his strength.
   2. Paul remained with these disciples at Damascus for a certain number of days.
   3. As soon as he was able by strength and instruction, he preached Christ to the Jews.
      a. He went boldly into the synagogues where the zealous Jews met for worship.
      b. Remember, this man had letters in hand from the chief priests against Jesus.
      c. He preached the message he once destroyed – Jesus Christ is the Son of God.
      d. His conversion and preaching amazed the Jews – it was a miraculous change.
      e. As Paul grew in strength, he was able to confound the Jews there about Christ.
   4. Sometime during these days, Paul went into Arabia for more revelation (Gal 1:11-24).

5. After many days had passed (three years), the Jews planned and waited to kill Paul.
6. The glorious Saul of Tarsus was saved by leaving town in a basket (II Cor 11:31-33).

D. Paul comes to Jerusalem, meets two apostles, joins the disciples, preaches, and leaves (Acts 9:26-30).
1. His first attempt to join them was rejected, for they could not believe his testimony.
2. Barnabas takes Paul, introduces him to Peter and James, and confirms his conversion.
3. After that, he was with them at Jerusalem. Membership is always by mutual assent.
4. Back in Jerusalem, Paul spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus. What a change!
5. The Grecians were Jewish proselytes and Hellenized Jews Paul could confound.
6. The Jerusalem saints sent their trophy of grace to Tarsus via Caesarea (Gal 1:21).

E. The saints had a respite from persecution for a time and multiplied spiritually (Acts 9:31).
1. Edification and multiplication are associated with walking in the fear of the Lord.
2. Edification and multiplication are associated with the comfort of the Holy Ghost.

F. Peter heals Aeneas of the palsy and moves many to turn to the Lord in two cities (Acts 9:32-35).
1. Peter was travelling also and came to a congregation of saints at Lydda.
2. In that city was a certain man, who had been paralyzed with the palsy eight years.
3. Peter heals him in the name of the Lord Jesus, and he rises up immediately!
4. There was a great turning to the Lord in two cities from this great sign and wonder.

G. Peter raises Dorcas from the dead and moves many to turn to the Lord in another city (Acts 9:36-43).
1. A virtuous woman named Tabitha, or Dorcas, was a member of the church at Joppa.
2. She was known, as all virtuous women should be known, for good works and charity.
3. Much of her charitable work was for widows, revealing her pure religion (James 1:27).
4. She became sick and died. They washed her and laid her in an upper room.
5. Because Lydda was close to Joppa, they sent messengers for Peter to come quickly.
6. The indication is they sent for Peter after she died, which manifests exceptional faith.
7. Peter kneels and prays, as we should always do, and promptly raises Dorcas to life.
8. This was known throughout Joppa, and many more believed in the Lord by this sign.
9. Peter stayed there in Joppa with Simon a tanner, waiting for Cornelius as in Acts 10.