

ACTS 9:20-29

A. Paul Preaches At Damascus -

Acts 9:20-22 - And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.

Acts 9:21 But all that heard *him* were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests? Acts 9:22 But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.

1. What a revolution that has taken place in Saul/Paul's heart and life. He goes into the synagogues where he had planned to **per**secute believers, but instead he confirms the **be**lief that Jesus Christ was the Son of God.

*There were some fearful and skeptical Jews who questioned the sincerity of Saul's new faith. But Saul held his ground, even amazing them by what he said concerning Christ.

2. There is a big controversy as to **what** Paul preached.
 - a. Some say he preached the kingdom gospel. They say that is all he understood at this point in time. Before he could preach the dispensation of grace truth, God would have to get him away from the others - being all alone - they say.
 - b. Some say Paul did not offer the kingdom to Israel, so he did not preach the same message. However, the **way** one was to be saved and what that meant was completely **different**.

S. Brasseaux: * "During the book of Acts, Paul preached that Jesus was the Son of God, Christ/
* Messiah (Acts 9:20, 27, 29; 13:25-39; 17:2-3; 18:5; 19:4; 26:22-23), probably
* using Daniel 9:25-26 to show the **timing** of Christ's crucifixion. It shows how
* Daniel 9 matches with the time of Jesus' death. That proved that Jesus was
* Israel's Messiah, fulfilling Daniel's prophecy time. No doubt, Paul proceeded to
* preach to Israel how her now-**re**jected Messiah had gone to the Gentiles

through

her

* **his** ministry (uncircumcision) and now was doing something separate from
* (Israel) prophetic program."

not

* "This was how Paul's ministry to Israel operated in the book of Acts. The book of
* Acts confirms that Paul never-**ever** offered Israel her kingdom. So Paul could
* have been saved by the Gospel of the Kingdom. He could not have preached a
* gospel that had not saved him! Paul's ministry was completely **se**parate from
* that message and program."

Galatians 1:15-16 - But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called *me* by his grace, Gal. 1:16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:

- c. Even as early as Acts 15 (Gal. 2), Israel's apostles admitted that Paul had a **spe**cial gospel committed to his trust - a gospel separate and **dist**inct from the Gospel of the Kingdom, that the 12 apostles preached.

Galatians 2:7 - But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as *the gospel* of the circumcision *was* unto Peter;

3. Also, when at the start Paul preached Christ is the Son of God, that meant there was a connection between the believing Kingdom Jews' message and the Gospel of Grace message - **Christ!** But **how** one would be saved in each program (Law-Grace), and **what** salvation meant in each program, was completely different.

*Remember, though the Bible Church began with Paul, Acts actually is the story of Israel's **fall** and not the birth and growth of the Church of this age. It begins with and ends with:

Acts 1:6 - When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

Acts 28:28 - Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and *that* they will hear it.

It reveals how Israel as a nation rejected Christ in **spite of the Pentecost miracles, apostles' supernatural works, the 12's powerful appeals, and Paul's testimony.

B. Luke's Omission -

1. The author of Acts, Luke, now gives us some flash details - but not all of Saul's journey. We receive

Acts 9:23-25 - And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him: Acts 9:24 But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. Acts 9:25 Then the disciples took him by night, and let *him* down by the wall in a basket.

the full details **later** by Paul's own testimony.

2. Notice: vs. 19 [certain days with the disciples]
vs. 23 [and after that many days were fulfilled]

*There is **more** time in vs. 23 than in the first 8 1/2 chapters of Acts. In a Scofield Bible, in the notes, Acts 1-8 is **one** year. In Acts 9:23 [after that many years] is **3** years!

- a. Galatians 1:17 - Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.

*This is probably Acts 9:19-21.

- b. Galatians 1:18 - Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.

Acts 9:26 - And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.

*Galatians 1:18 is after he had been in Damascus for three years! Paul then returns to Jerusalem.

3. In Galatians 1:17b [I went into Arabia,] **Why** did Paul go into Arabia?

- a. More than likely Saul made his way to Mount **Sinai** in Arabia. This was where God gave Moses the Law. It feels right that this is where God led Saul to go and where He revealed to Saul the doctrines of **grace**.

- b. God got Saul to a place of seclusion where he spent a big part of 3 years in a private seminary with Christ teaching him! Afterward, Saul would return to Damascus and then to Jerusalem.

*After three years of instruction, he then was ready and prepared to go to the Gentiles - not preaching Judaism and the Law - but Grace. Not with the Kingdom message of killing-crucifying-murdering, a crime against Christ, but the Gospel of Christ. This means that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, who died on the cross - shed His blood for our sins - was buried - then rose from the dead.

Question? Do you see the difference? It wasn't until later that Peter and other believing Jews could grasp the gospel's (D.B.R.) accomplishments!

II Peter 3:15-16 - And account *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; 2Peter 3:16 As also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as *they do* also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

- c. So Saul departed from Damascus (Acts 9:20-25), spent some 3 years in Arabia (9:23), and returned to Damascus before returning to Jerusalem (9:26).
- d. Saul's stay in Arabia has some reasons:

- (1) No doubt when hearing about Saul's conversion, the religious leaders at Jerusalem were madder than a hornet and it would be risky for Saul's life.

*If they were putting ordinary believers to death, just think of what they would like to do to Saul! This had happened already at Damascus, but the believers hid him in a basket and let him down the wall to escape. So when Saul does return to Jerusalem, the Jews were waiting to slay him.

- (2) But another reason was that if just after Saul's conversion he had gone to Jerusalem, his apostleship would have come into question. One, he was not prepared in knowledge, nor spiritually mature yet. Two, most would have said he was subject to, or under, the 12's authority and should receive his ministry-message from them.

*This is why it was so important for Saul to be entirely apart from the 12. And by doing it this way, Saul received revelation personally from Jesus Christ - Who explained it to Saul. From the moment Saul graduated, he lacked nothing concerning knowledge of the scriptures when explaining his message and ministry to the 12.

Galatians 2:1-7 - Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with *me* also. Gal. 2:2 And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain. Gal. 2:3 But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: Gal. 2:4 And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: Gal. 2:5 To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. Gal. 2:6 But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed *to be somewhat* in conference added nothing to me: Gal. 2:7 But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as *the gospel* of the circumcision *was* unto Peter;

4. The timing of this at times is difficult. However, here goes:
 - a. Going to Jerusalem, Saul goes to see Peter - the **lead** apostle. Saul spends **15** days with Peter. While there, he only sees Peter and James, the Lord's half-brother. Acts 9:26a [And when Saul was come to Jerusalem] - this coincides with: Galatians 1:17-19 - [Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Gal. 1:18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. Gal. 1:19 But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.]
 - b. Then Saul returns to Jerusalem **14** years later, taking Barnabas and Titus with him. This coincides with Acts 9:26-29 and Galatians 2:1 -[Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with *me* also.]

C. Saul In Jerusalem -

Acts 9:26-29 - And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. Acts 9:27 But Barnabas took him, and brought *him* to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. Acts 9:28 And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem. Acts 9:29 And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him.

1. It was natural for the believing Jews at Jerusalem to be frightened about the great persecutor of the Little Flock being among them. They were suspicious of this violent man who had the blood on his hands of **their** friends and brethren. How could Saul now be one of them in the faith?
2. But one of them, Barnabas, comes to Saul's aid and personally takes him to the apostles. He **stands** with Saul as he introduces him (can you feel the atmosphere?). Barnabas explains that the Lord had appeared to him and revealed how Saul was now a preacher for Him.
3. Saul preaches boldly in Jerusalem, while defending God's truth old and **new**. There were some Jews in Jerusalem who hated Saul, the turncoat, and looked for the opportunity to slay him.
4. It mentions James in Galatians 1:19, the Lord's half-brother.

Matthew 13:55 - Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?

*This James becomes the Messianic Church's **pastor**-leader by Acts 15.

But notice:

Acts 12:17 - But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, Go shew these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place.

Acts 15:19 - Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God:

5. It is important to see, that already in Acts 9, both Peter and James (even the 12) recognize Saul's conversion and commission. God is overruling and transitioning from Israel's prophetic program to the Body Mystery Program.

