

ACTS 9:29 - 10:8

A. Saul Flees Again -

Acts 9:29-31 - And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him. Acts 9:30 Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus. Acts 9:31 Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.

1. Saul, excited about his own conversion, boldly speaks in Jerusalem about Christ. When the Grecian Jews are told the truth by Paul, they take offence (as most religious lost people do).

*The Grecian Jews could not stand anyone who spoke against Judaism. They were so upset with Saul that they try to figure out a way to murder him! That was their way of getting rid of the opposition.

2. When the believing brethren realized the seriousness of the Grecians' threat, they move to protect Saul. They take Saul south to Caesarea, a seaport. From there Saul sails home to Tarsus in the north.

- a. *It was not the brethren's words alone that moved Saul to flee. He also got a word from the Lord.

Acts 22:18, 21 - And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. Acts 22:21 And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.

- b. God had instructed the 12 to begin their ministry at Jerusalem, but it was not so with Saul. God here sends Saul home, where he will spend some time until Barnabas tracks him down at the end of Chapter 11.

*At this moment scripturally, we leave Saul for awhile and return to Peter.

3. Though home in Tarsus, Saul didn't just sit around. He was active. Saul's whole life as a believer was characterized by the most intense zeal to make Christ known. About the same time of his stay in Tarsus, Paul later wrote:

Galatians 1:21 - [Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia;]

*It could have been then that he preached Christ in Syria and Cilicia.

Acts 15:23 - And they wrote *letters* by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia:

Acts 15:40-41 - And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God. Acts 15:41 And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.

B. Peter's Ministry Resumed -

Acts 9:32-43 - And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all *quarters*, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda. Acts 9:33 And there he found a certain man named Aeneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy. Acts 9:34 And Peter said unto him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately. Acts 9:35 And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord. Acts 9:36 Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did. Acts 9:37 And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid her in an upper chamber. Acts 9:38 And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring him that he would not delay to come to them. Acts 9:39 Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them. Acts 9:40 But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up. Acts 9:41 And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive. Acts 9:42 And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord. Acts 9:43 And it came to pass, that he tarried many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner.

1. Remember, Acts is transitioning from Israel's Prophetic Law Program to the Body Mystery Grace Program. In middle Acts, we have two programs with two different messages happening simultaneously for a brief period of time.

* We have the 12 proclaiming the kingdom message. Revelation of the Mystery Body Church had
* not yet been given to them. Saul has the beginnings of the Gospel of Grace, but he is sent away (Tarsus). God has some other things He wants done first so the Messianic Church will later accept Saul and his message. God softens the Little Flock before He reveals His new Dispensation of Grace.

2. Peter (Apostle) is the main figure of Acts 1-8. In Chapter 9, we have Saul's conversion and his early experience as a Christian. This is briefly followed by Peter again (Acts 9:32-11:18). Then Paul becomes the main figure.

<u>Peter</u> 1:1-8:40	<u>Paul</u> 9:1-31	<u>Peter</u> 9:32-11:18	<u>Paul</u> 11:19-28:31
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3. As we have seen, though God had begun to do something new through Saul, that did not mean the Old Israel program was to immediately disappear. Though the nation's final rejection happened with the stoning of Stephen, God continued to work with His people. This was to bring them to jealously, because of the Gentiles who were being converted.

Romans 11:11 - I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.

*The new Body program would only gradually replace the old. This is why God now mentions Peter again in the following verses after Saul returns home (Tarsus).

4. In verses 32-35, it shows the healing of Aeneas by Peter.

- a. In verses 36-43, it shows that Dorcas (a godly woman, who was a seamstress) had died - but Peter **raises** her from the dead! As a result, many throughout the region **believed** that Jesus was the Christ - the Messiah.
- b. Peter's power and authority was just confirming that the miracles and **signs** the Jews **required** were **still** in effect. This is a Jewish Apostle to the Jewish people.

Mark 16:20 - And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

I Corinthians 1:22a - [For the Jews **require a sign...**]

Hebrews 2:3-4 - How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*; Heb. 2:4 God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

*God was setting the stage (Aeneas healed and Dorcas raised) for **the next great event** in the book of Acts. Next, God will save a **Gentile** through Peter, another miracle! This will be the **only** Gentile any of the 12 will ever share Christ with. This Gentile will be a pivotal person who **will help** the transition from Israel to the Body take place. This will build a **bridge** between Peter and Paul later (Acts 15).

C. Gentile Cornelius -

Acts 10:1-2 - There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian *band*, Acts 10:2 *A devout man*, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.

1. Up to this point, the scattered Jews preached to no one but Jews **only**.

Acts 11:19 - Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.

2. This included Gentiles who had become proselytes to Judaism. This type of proselyte had become circumcised and **lived** according to the customs and commands of the Mosaic Law.

Acts 15:1 - And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, *and said*, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.

3. Another type of proselyte was a Gentile who **attended** the synagogue services and worshipped the **God** of Israel, but did not submit to circumcision. This proselyte had privileges but also was limited in some areas of the Jewish religion.

*It is believed Cornelius was **uncircumcised**. He feared God, with all his family. We know he gave alms to Jewish people and was faithful to pray the ninth hour, or 3:00pm. Cornelius **knew** something of the O.T. prophets and about Christ.

Acts 10:37 - That word, *I say, ye know*, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached;

4. Cornelius was an **ex**ceptional man when you consider him being a Roman centurion. He was **opp**osite the normal Roman soldier who was ruthless, cruel, brutal, and pridefully over a 100 soldiers.

- a. *According to human standards (king-generous-religious), he looked like a **s**aved man - but as yet, he was **not**.

Acts 11:14 - Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.

- b. It is interesting that God did take into account Cornelius' good deeds to the Jews. This is the **only** account in the N.T. where God honored an **un**saved man's deeds and prayers.

John 9:31 - Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.

Acts 10:3-5 - He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. Acts 10:4 And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. Acts 10:5 And now send men to Joppa, and call for *one* Simon, whose surname is Peter:

5. Note: According to the Abrahamic Covenant, God promised to bless those who would **b**less the descendants of Abraham.

Genesis 12:1-3 - Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: Gen. 12:2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: Gen. 12:3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

- a. When Christ judges the nations (Gentiles-Cornelius) at the end of the Great Tribulation, the Gentiles are going to be judged on the **b**asis of their treatment of the Lord's brethren, the Jewish people.

Matthew 25:40 - And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me.

*Those who treated Israel well will be allowed to go into the **k**ingdom - the others will be destroyed.

- b. Cornelius **l**oved the Jewish people and financially supported them. I believe, as a result of that, God honored His Genesis 12:1-3 promise and even sent **s**alvation to his house.

6. As Cornelius prays, he has a vision where an angel tells him to send for Apostle Peter so he can instruct him into a **t**ruer relationship with God.

Acts 10:5-8 - And now send men to Joppa, and call for *one* Simon, whose surname is Peter: Acts 10:6 He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do. Acts 10:7 And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually; Acts 10:8 And when he had declared all *these* things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.

QUESTIONS?

1. Why are religious people the hardest to try and explain truth to?
2. What did Saul do when he went home to Tarsus?
3. Why were there two programs happening in Middle Acts - at the same time?
4. Why did God recognize Cornelius at all?
5. Why were the miracles important to Peter?