

## Acts 9 – The encounter on the road to Damascus

### **I. Saul seeks out Christians beyond Jerusalem – 9:1-2 (cf. 22:3-5; 26:10-11)**

- A. Saul was “breathing threats and murder”
  - 1. Saul, in his overzealousness, is at least threatening the saints with murder
  - 2. “Strove” to cause saints to blaspheme; voted to put saints to death
- B. Saul had ability to go to the high priest to seek authority
  - 1. Saul wanted to search out Christians in the synagogues of Damascus

### **II. Saul speaks to Jesus of Nazareth on the road to Damascus – 9:4-9 (cf. 22: 6-11; 26:12-18)**

#### **A. Harmonizing the events from three re-telling’s – 9:4-9; 22:6-11; 26:12-18**

- 1. **9:4-9**
  - a) A light shone around him
  - b) He fell to the ground
  - c) He heard a voice from Heaven
  - d) The men who journeyed with him stood speechless
  - e) The men heard a voice but saw no one
  - f) Saul then arose from the ground, opened his eyes, and saw no one
  - g) Saul, unable to see, was led to Damascus
- 2. **22:6-11**
  - a) At noon a light shone around him
  - b) He fell to the ground
  - c) He heard a voice from Heaven
  - d) The men who journeyed with Paul saw the light and were afraid
  - e) They did not hear the voice of Him who spoke to Saul
  - f) Saul, unable to see, was led to Damascus
- 3. **26:12-18**
  - a) At midday a light shone around him
  - b) It shone around those who were with Paul
  - c) All of them, Saul and his travel companions, fell to the ground
  - d) Saul heard a voice speaking in Hebrew

### **III. Ananias is sent to Saul; Saul is baptized – 9:10-19**

- A. The Lord speaks to Ananias, telling him to go to Saul – 9:10-16
  - 1. Saul had received a vision of Ananias coming and restoring his sight
  - 2. Ananias expresses slight caution, given Saul’s reputation
  - 3. The Lord describes Saul’s purpose:
    - a) He is a chosen vessel
    - b) He will bear Christ’s name before Gentiles, kings, and Israel
    - c) He will be shown how many things he must suffer for Christ’s name
- B. Ananias obeys the Lord, goes to Saul – 9:17-19
  - 1. Laid hands on Paul
    - a) Just as the vision to Saul revealed
    - b) Perhaps as a means to heal?
      - (1) No mention anywhere that Ananias was filled with the Holy Spirit in that he could perform miraculous gifts...
  - 2. “brother Saul”

- a) Ananias was a Christian, yet Saul was not – not “brother” as a Christian
  - b) “brother” as a Jew is the best way to understand this – See Rom. 9:3 “brethren”
- 3. Saul is healed of his blindness and was baptized.
- C. Cf. Acts 22:12-16
  - 1. Ananias was a devout man according to the law, and had a good reputation among the Jews
  - 2. Ananias describes Saul’s mission as one that would necessarily require him to be in direct contact with Jesus
  - 3. “Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord”

#### **IV. Saul in Damascus as a Christian – 9:20-25**

- A. He immediately preached that Christ is the Son of God in the synagogues of the Jews
  - 1. Many were amazed, considering his initial reason for coming to Damascus
  - 2. Saul confounded the Jews, proving Jesus is the Christ
- B. The Jews plotted to kill Saul
  - 1. The saints helped him escape

#### **V. Saul’s journey from Damascus – Harmonizing Acts 9, 11, 15, 22, Gal. 1, 2**

- A. Leaves Damascus – Acts 9:25
- B. Spends some time in Arabia (east of Damascus) and returns to Damascus (THREE YEARS) – Gal. 1:15-18
- C. Goes to Jerusalem (1<sup>st</sup> time back – sees Peter and James) – Gal. 1:18-20; Acts 9:26-29; Acts 22:17-21
- D. Goes to Cilicia and Syria (Tarsus and Antioch) – Gal. 1:21-24; Acts 9:30; Acts 11:25-26;
- E. Goes to Jerusalem after first journey (FOURTEEN YEARS) – Gal. 2:1-10; Acts 15:1-2, 4-12
- F. Returns to Antioch – Gal 2:11-13; Acts 15:30-35

#### **VI. Peter journeys outside of Jerusalem performing miracles – 9:31-43**

- A. Churches in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria
- B. Peter at Lydda
  - 1. Healed Aeneas who had been bedridden for eight years
- C. Peter at Joppa
  - 1. Raised Tabitha/Dorcas from the dead
  - 2. Stayed with Simon the tanner

### Questions for Acts 9:

1. What does it mean to “kick against the goads”? What might this suggest regarding Saul’s mental state concerning Jesus of Nazareth?
2. Harmonize the events depicted in Acts 9 with Acts 22 and 26.
3. Why did Saul not eat or drink for three days in Damascus? What is this called and why was it done?
4. What is the significance of Saul being blinded? How was Saul blinded? See Acts 22:11
5. Did Saul have any communication with Jesus (or did Jesus have any communication with Saul) at all in these three days?
6. Is Jesus “getting back” at Saul for his mistreatment of the Christians in vs. 16? Why or why not?
7. Did Ananias lay hands on Saul as to give him the Holy Spirit? Why or why not? If not, what was the purpose of laying hands on him? If so, how does this harmonize with other Scripture, such as Acts 8:13-17?
8. What is a necessary inclusion to “calling on the name of the Lord to be saved” based on the additional text reviewed? What are we told that this necessary inclusion does for us?
9. Harmonize Saul’s travels based on Acts 9, 11, 15, and Gal. 1, 2.