

Valley Bible Church
Sermon Notes for February 10, 2013

The Calling of Saul
Acts 9:1-9

As the gospel advanced from Jews (Acts 1-7) to Samaritans (Acts 8:1-24) and to Gentiles (Acts 8:25-40; Acts 10), Acts 9:1-31 focuses on Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles.

The story of Paul's conversion is told two additional times in Acts, by Paul before a mob of Jews (Acts 22:1-21) and by Paul before King Agrippa (Acts 26:1-18).

1. Saul's rebellion against God (9:1-2)

Luke referred to Paul by his Hebrew name, Saul, until Acts 13:9, when his Greek name began to be used.

Saul's threats were more than words since he had a record of participation in persecution of the church (Acts 7:58; 8:1; 22:3).

Saul's eagerness toward persecution led him beyond Jerusalem. His request for letters from the high priest would give him authority in the synagogues.

Notably, the possibility of Saul arresting believers in Christ in Damascus tells us of the spread of the gospel 155 miles north of Jerusalem.

2. Jesus' revelation to Saul (9:3-6)

The revelation was dramatic.

- The light at noontime (cf. Acts 22:6)
- The voice in the Hebrew dialect (cf. Acts 26:14)
- The falling to the ground (cf. Acts 26:14) with only Saul able to understand the words (cf. Acts 22:9; 26:14)

The revelation was purposeful.

The significance of Saul's conversion with the specific revelation of Jesus is the fact that his apostleship is based upon his encounter with the resurrected Christ (Acts 1:21-22; Acts 22:15; 1 Corinthians 9:1; 1 Corinthians 15:8).

The revelation was instructive.

By persecuting believers in Christ, Saul was persecuting Jesus. This is significant for those opposing the faith and also for those belonging to the faith.

The revelation was redemptive.

Saul's zealousness against God was without knowledge (Romans 8:1-2). But this lack of knowledge did not excuse Paul's behavior (1 Timothy 1:13-15), for he was sincerely wrong.

The New King James Version includes the Lord's words in Acts 26:14, "it is hard for you to kick against the goads." While the phrase did not exist originally in Acts 9, Jesus did make this statement. Saul was prodded by the Lord prior to this revelation but chose to resist the Lord's initiative.

3. The response to the revelation (9:7-9)

The men with Saul would also be guilty of persecuting Christ but their mission was abruptly stalled. It is unknown what happened to Saul's fellow persecutors.

Saul was blinded, but could spiritually see. The men could still see but remained spiritually blind.

May we, by the grace of God, respond to Christ's calling of us with the life of commitment of Saul rather than the life of obscurity of his companions.