

ACTS 9

vs. 1-19

Saul was continuing to persecute the Church and received permission to go to Damascus to arrest Christians and bring them back to Jerusalem for trial. As he approached the city a great light shone and he fell to the ground. The Lord spoke to Saul and told him to go to the city and there he would be told what to do. Saul, now believing in Christ, found himself blind and was led into the city.

The Lord then spoke to Ananias and instructed him to go to where Saul was staying and restore Saul's sight. Ananias was hesitant (knowing of Saul's reputation) but obeyed when the Lord persisted and told him that Saul would be the one to carry the message of Christ to the non-Jewish world (the Gentiles being inferior and unworthy in the mind of many Jews). Ananias went and healed Saul, and Saul was baptized.

vs. 19-31

An interval of about 2-3 years occurs at this point (Galatians 1:15-18) where Saul went into the wilderness and was instructed by God. He then returned to Damascus where he convincingly preaches the message of Christ. Unable to defeat him in debate, the Jews conspired to kill Saul. When Saul learned of the plot, he was lowered at night in a basket, through a whole in the wall.

Saul arrived in Jerusalem, but was not accepted by the Christians, who were skeptical of his conversion. Barnabas finally interceded for Saul and explained what an asset Saul had been in Damascus.

Saul debated with the Grecian Jews (those not from Palestine, originally) but they also planned to kill him. The Christians then sent Saul off to Tarsus.

The Church in the meantime, began to enjoy a time of peace and it continued to grow in number and in their respect of Jesus Christ.

vs. 32-43

Peter continued to travel and teach about Christ. In Lydda, he found a paralytic (for 8 years) and healed him. This caused many to believe Peter's message about Christ and they became followers, too.

A good woman named Tabitha, died in Joppa and Peter was called for. Upon arriving, he went up to the room where her body was and prayed. He then instructed her to get up, and she arose. This miracle caused many people in Joppa to believe in the Lord.

Peter continued to stay on in Joppa with a tanner named Simon.

ACTS 10

vs. 1- 8

Away in Caesarea was a man named Cornelius. He was a Gentile from Rome who had come to believe in the God of the Jews. God spoke to him and instructed him to send for Peter, who was in Joppa. Cornelius immediately obeyed and sent for Peter.

vs. 9-23

Peter, in the meantime, had a vision in Joppa. He was on top of the roof of the house (used in that area as "decks" or "porches" are here) when he saw a large sheet come out of heaven that was full of various types of animals. He was told to kill and eat, but he refused (it was against Jewish law to eat certain animals and Peter was not about to be disobedient to his Jewish laws). The Lord told him that these were no longer unclean and that he was to eat. This happened 3 times and Peter refused each time.

The messengers from Cornelius had now arrived and were at the door of the house. The Spirit then told Simon Peter that he was to go with the messengers. He promptly went down and was informed that Cornelius, a Gentile, wanted to hear Peter's message. Peter invited the men to stay for the evening and they would head out the next day.

vs. 24-48

Peter went to Cornelius' home and was met by the friends and relatives that Cornelius had invited to come and hear the message about Jesus. Peter then explained that God had made it clear to him, that he was no longer bound to certain Jewish restrictions, but was free to come and share with the Gentiles. Cornelius had explained what God had instructed him to do and of his desire to know more about God.

Peter then began to share freely with them, the message of Jesus Christ. While Peter was teaching, God sent the Holy Spirit upon these Gentiles as a sign of His approval of their entrance into Christ's Church. This convinced Peter and those with him that these Gentile believers could also be baptized and be added to the Church. Following this, Peter was invited to stay with them a while longer.

Acts 11

vs. 1-18

The Jewish Christians in Jerusalem heard that a Gentile (Cornelius) had accepted Jesus Christ. The Jews had become a group unto themselves, as a nation, and now they wondered if Gentiles should be allowed into their Lord's Church.

Peter gave a report of how it had all come about. He related the story of the dream that he had (sheet full of animals let down from Heaven 3 times) and how he had resisted the idea of coming in contact with what was considered "unclean" (God had given such restrictions to animals-- the Jews had adopted the same attitude towards the Gentiles [non-Jewish]). Peter then related how the Holy Spirit instructed him to go with the messengers to the house of Cornelius and how the Holy Spirit came upon the Gentiles while Peter was telling them of Christ. Peter took this as a sign of God's acceptance of the Gentiles.

The Jews of Jerusalem rejoiced and glorified God. They no longer had any objections and realized that "even the Gentiles" were welcome to a place in Christ's eternal Kingdom.

vs. 19-30

When the church had been persecuted (see chapter 8) and fled, they went spreading the Word of God. The only one's they told, however, were other Jewish people.

The time had now arrived when certain believers came to Antioch (about 350-370 miles north of Jerusalem) and shared the message of Christ with the Gentiles. These non-Jewish hearers then accepted the message and the Lord. The Church continued to grow, as the Lord blessed their efforts.

Barnabas was sent by the Jerusalem Church to go and assist Antioch in their efforts to teach believers and the city the truth about Christ. He worked with the Church in Antioch for a while, and then went to Tarsus to get Saul to help. They returned to Antioch and continued to work with the people there. [Luke records that it was at Antioch, during this time, when the followers of Christ were nicknamed and called: CHRISTIANS]

A prophet named Agabus, predicted a famine that would come (and was fulfilled). The Church at Antioch decided to send help back to the Christians in Judea. Saul and Barnabas were sent as their messengers.

STUDY GUIDE

ACTS 9

1. What was the purpose of Saul's mission to Damascus?
2. Summarize Jesus' appearance to Saul.
3. What happened to Saul and how long was he like this?
4. What was Ananias' mission?
5. How did Ananias first respond?
6. What didn't Ananias understand?
7. After accepting Jesus, what did Saul do?
8. How did the Jews respond?
9. Summarize the believers in Jerusalem's reaction to Saul.
10. List Peter's miracles.

BONUS:

1. What lessons can be learned from Saul's conversion.
2. List the trouble Saul faced in this chapter after he became a Christian.
3. What were the results of Peter's miracles?

STUDY GUIDE

ACTS 10

1. How is Cornelius' moral character described?
2. How did God speak to him and what did God say?
3. Summarize Peter's vision.
4. What was Peter commanded to do while he was thinking about the vision?
5. Who had Cornelius invited to come and hear Peter?
6. What was against the Jewish law?
7. What did Peter finally realize?
8. What did Jesus command his followers to do?
9. What happened while Peter was still speaking?
10. What conclusion did Peter make and what did he order?

BONUS:

1. Outline Peter's sermon
2. List all that Cornelius was told to do to become a Christian.

STUDY GUIDE

ACTS 11

1. Who complained about Peter's action and what was their charge?
2. What example did Peter give to show that God approved of his actions?
3. After hearing Peter's explanation, what was their response?
4. Who spread the good news to the Gentiles at Antioch?
5. How did Jesus show His approval?
6. What did Barnabas find at Antioch?
7. Who did he get to help him and what did they do?
8. Where were the followers of Jesus first called Christians?
9. What man had a prophecy and what was it?
10. how did the people respond to it?

BONUS

1. What was the difference between John's baptism and the one that Jesus commands?
2. How did the Christians help each other in Jerusalem and Antioch?