

Jesus Christ's work through the Apostles in Judea and Samaria

Saul or Paul?

".... and ye shall be witness unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judae'a, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." **Acts 1:8**

Introduction: Acts chapter 7 closed with Philip being taken by the Holy Spirit to Azotus and then Philip finally settles in Caesarea where we find him in Acts 21:8. We also see the rejoicing of the Ethiopian Eunuch as He was saved, baptized and now has a good news message to carry back to his people! Chapter 9's opening is reminiscent of chapter 8 verses 1 through 3. We find Saul continuing his persecution of the early Christians, both men and women. As the pages turn in the early churches history, we find the Gospel moving from to include now the Gentile nations, heading quickly toward the uttermost parts. We will find Saul's conversion and also Peter's ministering beyond the borders of Jerusalem.



Joppa

¹Joppa became the port of Jerusalem in the days of Solomon, and has been ever since. Here Jonah took ship to flee from the presence of God (**Jon 1:3**). Here, on the house-top of Simon the tanner, "by the seaside," Peter had his vision (**Ac 11:5**). The existing town contains about 4000 inhabitants. Joppa Heb.

¹ <http://www.bible-history.com/geography/ancient-israel/joppa.html>

yapo, "beauty" was an old city on the Mediterranean, about 30 miles NW of Jerusalem. It is supposed to have received its name from the mass of sunshine that its houses reflected.

Lydda

²It is located in the midst of a rich and fertile plain. It was one of the most westernly of the Jewish settlements after the Exile, the site of which is described as Gehaharashim, the valley of the smiths or craftsmen. It was here that Peter healed the paralytic and secured many converts (Acts 9:32-35). It was not Jewish, but pagan, under the name Diospolis.



Damascus

I. Saul's Conversion 1-10

A. Saul's Desire 1-2

1. "Yet breathing out" – rolling out of His mouth, gives the idea of His focus
2. Threatening's – Denouncing with every breath these Christians
3. Slaughter – Murder
 - a. This had moved way past seal and consumed Saul
 - b. Sin is all consuming
4. "disciples of the Lord" 1
 - a. Why Christians in particular?

² <http://www.bible-history.com/geography/ancient-israel/lydda.html>

“Across the six years that Pew has conducted the study, Christians were being harassed for their faith in 151 countries and Muslims in 135. Together they represent the world’s two largest religious groups and more than half of the world’s population.

Jews, who make up less than 1% of the world’s population, experienced religious persecution in 95 countries.” **Pew Study: Christians Are The World’s Most Oppressed Religious Group – 2014**

Laos: Death and No Verdict “A Christian leader died Sept. 17 of medical complications which were the result of a lengthy prison sentence for his faith.” October 28, 2015

Tanzania: Arson Destroys 7 Churches “Arsonists used gasoline as an accelerant to ensure that seven churches in northwestern Tanzania were destroyed in attacks on Sept. 22 and Sept. 27.” October 14, 2015 – We support missionaries in this country the Wagoner’s

Syria: I am N “After stating their names and where they were from, three Assyrian Christians wearing orange jumpsuits were shot in the back of the head as they knelt in the desert sand.” October 13, 2015

5. “men or women” 2
6. “it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks”

B. Saul’s Destination 2-3

1. (Damascus) 150+miles away
2. 2.5 miles per hour / 8 hours a day = 7.5 days
3. Does not include food/clothing/shelter/money
4. “men which journeyed with him”
5. Paul was trying to stop the spread of Christianity

C. Saul’s Detour (God’s providence) 3-10

1. What Saul Saw 3

- a. A heavenly light – this light was blinding, a changing light (blinded saw)
- b. **Rev 21:23, Acts 9:27, John 1:7-9**

2. What Saul Heard 4-5

- a. “Why persecutes thou me?”
- b. “It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks” – an ox/donkey being goaded
- c. Paul was being presented with his sinfulness

3. What Saul Did 6-10

- a. Trembling and astonished (the veil is being removed)
- b. Saul’s confession of faith “Lord what wilt thou have me to do?”
- c. Saul’s change in life
 - i. He served the Sanhedrin; Now he served the Lord
 - ii. He opposed the Lord; Now he obeyed the Lord
 - iii. He sought his own will (his flesh, wrath); Now he sought the Lord’s will

- d. *"He neither did eat or drink"*
- e. He saw the Lord; He heard the Gospel; He obeyed the call – Salvation process

II. The Servants Role; Ananias 10-18

A. Ananias' Command 11-12

- 1. Disciple –
- 2. *"Behold, I am here, Lord"* – *"Whatever though wilt"*
- 3. God instructs Ananias to go and minister to Saul

B. Ananias' Concern 13-14

- 1. Ananias had fear – *"to bind all that call on thy name"*
- 2. Ananias had heard – *"heard by many"*
- 3. Ananias had knowledge – *"he hath authority from the chief priests"*
- 4. What rational excuses do we have to not do what God would have us to do?
 - a. *"That's not my strong suite"*
 - b. *"I am not a people person"*
 - c. *"That will not work out"*

C. Ananias' Commitment 15-18

- 1. God reassures Ananias
- 2. God gave strength and courage
- 3. God kept Ananias safe
- 4. Ananias minister to Saul – what an investment, little did Ananias know how instrumental Saul would be for the spread of the Gospel

III. The Persecutor became Preacher 19-26

A. Filled with the Spirit 17

B. He was baptized 18

- 1. Identifying with Jesus Christ
- 2. Identifying with the local New Testament church

C. Around the believers in Damascus 19,22,26,30

D. Preached Christ, *"the he is the Son of God"* 20,22,29

1. **1 Cor 9:16**

- 2. There arose contention from the "old crowd" 21-23

3. **2 Cor 11:24-27**

- 4. There arose contention from the "new crowd" 26

IV. The Helper's Role (Barnabas) 26-28

A. Barnabas equipped with encouragement 27

1. "Son of consolation" – **Acts 4:36**

- a. **paraklēsis** - From **G3870**; imploration, solace: - comfort, consolation, exhortation, intreaty. **G3875 John 14:26 parakletos**

2. **Acts 11:22**- Exhorted people to cleave to the Lord

3. *"But Barnabas"*

- 4. We should equip with encouragement

B. Barnabas encouraged unity V27

V. The Results

A. Saul spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus 22,29

1. Hebrew speaking Jews 22

2. Grecian speaking Jews 29

B. Saul is sent to Caesarea and then Tarsus 30-31

1. Tarsus is north of Syria in the area of Cilicia

2. We will not hear from Saul again until Acts Chapter 13