



Acts 9:10-19 | Session 23 | Ananias and Saul

Acts 9:10-18

Verse 10—

Saul, *trembling and astonished* (vs. 6), just met Jesus, the one he is persecuting. The encounter was not a happy occasion. It caused him to *fall to the earth* and blinded him so that he had to be *led by the hand* (vs. 8) into the city of Damascus. For three days, in Damascus, Saul *neither did eat nor drink* (vs. 9). We will see in verse 11, that Saul is *praying* along with his fasting. The combination of the two may indicate Saul was repenting of his persecution of the Messiah. In Scripture, *fasting and praying* are connected with *mourning* (Nehemiah 1:4). Repentance and mourning may not be the same, but they both require some kind of lamenting. Saul is not putting up any kind of argument with what has just happened and we may assume he understands he was wrong in what he previously believed about Jesus.

A certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The word **disciple** is only used in the gospels and the book of Acts. It is interesting that those in the *body of Christ* (*what we call, the Church*) are never referred to as disciples.

Whereas Saul's encounter with Jesus seems to have been a physical event (vs. 3), **Ananias** is receiving a **vision**. We will read about visions 11 times in the book of Acts. We might call a **vision** a revelation that is divinely granted, which is why I would propose that visions (nor dreams with any meaning) are not granted today. We have the final revelation from God in his word.

Verse 11,12—

Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight. Ananias received direct, explicit instructions from Jesus in the vision. **Straight** street was the large east-west street that sliced directly through the city and it still exists today. **Judas** was a common name and given the Lord told Ananias the "GPS" coordinates, it must not have been too difficult to locate **one called Saul, of Tarsus**. Likewise, once Ananias reached the house, he would know for certain since he was told about Saul, **behold, he prayeth**.

The Lord assured Ananias; *he knows you are coming because* he **hath seen in a vision...he might receive his sight**.

Verse 13, 14—

By now, word has reached Damascus that Saul was coming to continue **the evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem**. Like the word *disciple*, the word **saints** may be a designation for Jewish believers in the Messiah, and not those in the *body of Christ*. The word **saints** is translated from the Greek word *hagios*, which is also translated *holy or holy one*. In Acts it is only used four times and always in connection with Jewish Kingdom era believers. Often, Christians today are referred to as **saints**, but this is probably not a correct designation. There are several indications in other N.T. passages that **saints** are distinct from those who are saved by grace through faith (See 1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 1:1; Ephesians 1:1; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:2, etc).

Nonetheless, Ananias has reservations about meeting Saul since **he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name**.

Verse 15—

Go thy way. There comes a time when we have to stop talking and get moving (Exodus 14:15). Saul has no choice in the matter he is a **chosen vessel**. If God chooses, then the idea of free will is negated. Saul implies that he did not have free will in the matter (1 Corinthians 9:17). God chose Saul, but we are not told (in the dispensation of grace) that God chooses us. We cannot assume that



because something happened to Saul, or any apostle, the same should take place in our lives. Serving the Lord today comes from *our desire* to do so (1 Timothy 3:1 is a good example). Saul would **bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel**. Some say this is the beginning of salvation by grace through faith since the Lord says Saul will go to the Gentiles. If so, it creates a problem in that Saul/Paul has not received the revelation from God of *salvation by grace through faith* (Ephesians 3:1-9). A case could be made that God revealed this to Saul during his three days of blindness, but it would be difficult to prove since the grace message is never voiced until Acts 13:38-39, at least 10 years later. I would make an assumption that initially Saul will be declaring the gospel of the kingdom, and not the gospel of salvation by grace through faith, by which we are saved. Verse 18 gives more evidence of this in that Saul, after receiving the Holy Ghost is baptized.

Verse 16—

I will show him, in the future tense. At this point God has not shown Saul anything. All that is known is that Saul is chosen, and that he is going to **suffer for my name's sake**. There is no indication of what type of suffering he will encounter, or what his ministry will be like.

Verse 17,18—

Ananias listened and obeyed and **went his way...into the house...putting his hands on him**. It is interesting that one or more of the apostles has not come to Damascus to lay their hands on Saul so that he **might be filled with the Holy Ghost**. Remember in 8:14ff Peter and John went to Samaria to lay their hands on the believers there *and they received the Holy Ghost*. Why, in one case would the apostles go, but in this case, God uses an unknown disciple? Could it be that God is doing something new here, apart from the ministry of the 12 apostles? Another interesting aspect of this encounter is that when Paul recounts his receiving of the Holy Ghost in Acts 22:16, he adds the words of Ananias as, "Arise and be baptized, and wash away they sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Clearly this is not salvation by grace through faith in that his baptism washed away his sins. There is nothing in this encounter having to do with *belief or faith*.

And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales. The word **scales** in the Greek is from the word *lepo* in which we get the word *leprosy*. **Forthwith** means *alongside* in Greek and it is the idea that *alongside the scales falling from his eyes he could see again*.

And was baptized. There is no indication that this baptism was a symbol of his salvation, or a testimony of his salvation (as we might see baptism today). We could conclude that Saul's baptism was no different than the baptism of John the baptizer (Mark 1:4), and Peter's instruction to be baptized for the remission of sins (Act 2:38).

