

ACTS 9

Introduction:

We now come to one of the most ____portant chapters in the Bible. Paul, within Christendom, has been considered mostly as just one of the apostles. There has been too _____ importance given to Paul when Scripture itself gives more attention to his conversion than to anyone else's.

A. Saul's Background And Character

1. Saul is completely immersed in his ____ligion, a true believer in O.T. Israel. Saul lives and breathes Judaism, the Mosaic Law, and the Temple. He is a Pharisee of Pharisees and of the tribe of Benjamin. He is of the _____ race, highly respected, and zealous of his father's traditions. His learning and knowledge in Israel's-Judaism's truths was the _____. Remember, he had been brought up in Jerusalem at the feet of the great Gamaliel.
2. An important aspect to Saul was that he had Roman citizenship. Saul was _____ a Roman citizen, which allowed him to travel almost anywhere.

Acts 22:27-29 - Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea. Acts 22:28 And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born. Acts 22:29 Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.

*Evidently one of Paul's ancestors either _____ chased or was _____ warded citizenship.

**Paul probably was born around the time of Christ's birth.

3. Saul felt that Jesus and His followers were trying to destroy the pillars of Judaism. This caused his _____ red and passion against Christ and His apostles especially. Saul believed Jesus Christ to be an _____ poster. To destroy Judaism was to destroy what he had dedicated his whole life to!
4. Saul, who had helped have Stephen stoned, had become Israel's _____ of persecution of the Messianic Jewish believers in Christ. He was consumed and _____ sessed with deadly ambition and a twisted religious zeal.

B. The Dispensational Significance Of Saul's Conversion

1. Remember, by Israel's religious leaders' act of stoning Stephen and their following persecution of Messiah-believing Jews, they declared they were _____ pletely rejecting Christ as their Messiah and opposed any Israelite who would believe in Christ. By doing this they, as a nation, were declaring _____ against God, Who had sent His Son - the Messiah of Israel.
2. By Abraham's own covenant, Israel was to bring blessings and salvation to the Gentiles and the world. This was to be accomplished _____ Israel as they accepted Christ as their Messiah. But now, Israel has _____ ed the world in open unbelief and rebellion. Israel's message to God was:

Luke 19:14 - But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this *man* to reign over us.

*Saul wholeheartedly believed and endorsed this message.

3. Also, remember that the religious leaders had in Acts 1-6 suffered humiliating _____ feats from the apostles' miraculous workings among the Jewish people. Their prestige, positions, popularity, and _____ essions were being threatened by these followers of Jesus their Messiah (especially Jesus' resurrection).

* They needed some _____ to help them stamp out this new-to-them Judaism. Saul _____ ly would
* be their man to lead the persecution of those in the Little Flock.

Acts 26:9-11 - I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Acts 26:10 Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against *them*. Acts 26:11 And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled *them* to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted *them* even unto strange cities.

Acts 8:1, 3 - And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles. Acts 8:3 As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed *them* to prison.

Galatians 1:13-14 - For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: Gal. 1:14 And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

Philippians 3:6 - Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

C. Some Questions?

1. What would now happen to the prophesied purpose of God to bless the Gentile nations through Israel's _____? How could blessings go to the Gentiles when Israel _____ self had joined the Gentiles in their rebellion against God?

Answer: The answer to these questions is the most amazing story _____ told. It is the secret story revealed about God's grace flowing from Calvary's Cross! God temporarily set aside His prophesied program to Israel and reached down in His unbelievable infinite mercy-grace-love to save Israel's fierce leader _____.

- a. Dr. Stam: "The world's and Israel's rebellion was to result in God's wrath (Ps. 22, Ps. 110:1). But God's love _____ fers, puts on _____, His judgment (Jesus standing?) to usher in a _____ dispensation of grace."
- b. God did not offer the riches of His grace apart from Israel and to all who would receive it by faith, _____ Saul's conversion that marked the beginning of God's new dispensation of grace.
2. The unfolding and unveiling of this _____ revelational truth about the mystery emerged through Paul _____ ually.

Acts 26:16 - But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;

II Corinthians 12:1 - It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.

Acts 26:15-16 - And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.
Acts 26:16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;

*The studied believer sees that the Pentecost Jewish-only program (promises-covenants-kingdom hope) did not _____denly go off the scene. From the Kingdom message to the Body message was a _____cess that allowed for better understanding and acceptance of God's new hidden truth to be revealed.

Romans 11:12 - Now if the fall of them *be* the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?

3. So Saul marked the beginning of the unfoldings of God's mystery truth of the Body of Christ - the cross' _____plishments and His purpose in this super-abounding grace. The fact that God calls another apostle, apart and distinct from the 12 apostles, definitely shows a new dispensation was being _____ered in.

4. Quotes:

- a. Dr. Arno C. Gabelein: "Superficial readers of the Word of God make no difference between the Gospel of the Kingdom and the Gospel of Grace."
- b. I.R. Dean: "Why was it necessary for Paul to have a new revelation of the gospel if he was to preach the same gospel that John the Baptist and Christ and His disciples had preached? Wherein lies the difference?"

"John the Baptist and Christ and His disciples offered Israel as Messiah.....Paul's gospel does _____ offer Israel a Messiah at all; God is not offering anyone a Messiah _____."

Note: Dean is right. Under Saul-Paul, God is not offering a Messiah now. But, God is offering salvation by grace to _____ who will believe - in a world that _____ rejects Jesus Christ as the Messiah.

Romans 11:30-33 - For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: Rom. 11:31 Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. Rom. 11:32 For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. Rom. 11:33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

D. Again, Saul-Paul The New Apostle Is Now The Pattern Of Salvation By Grace

I Timothy 1:15-16 - This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. 1Tim. 1:16 Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

1. Most, because the Pentecost-Prophetic program was not abolished at _____ and it was a prominent force during the early ministry of Saul-Paul's ministry, think-assume that God was simply continuing His people's program. But we know that with Paul's conversion, Israel began her _____cline and the Body Church began its _____cline.



2. I Corinthians 15:8 - And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

Today, when Jewish people, or Gentiles, are saved, they are placed into the Body of Christ - certain of heaven. We can say that _____ are saved out of due time. This is because they are not saved based upon the covenants-promises-or prophecies. But they are saved according to the Mystery Program of Grace, revealed through Paul. He was the _____ into the Body!

E. Saul to Paul - (To clear up any confusion about his name)

1. It is interesting that in _____ of his epistles does Paul ever refer to himself as Saul. He always calls himself Paul. His name Saul appears _____ times (only in Acts); whereas, the name Paul appears _____ times in the K.J.V.
2. The name Saul is Hebrew and the name Paul is his Roman name. Saul in Hebrew (Shaul) means _____-desired-wished. Paul in the Greek is Paulos, meaning "little" and is closely related to "pauo", meaning to _____-to cease.

- a. * This fits Paul's ministry. God has paused Israel's prophetic program and began our mystery program. To pause has the idea that it will start up _____. It conveys that Christ's return in wrath to destroy Israel's enemies has been _____laid.
- b. Just by Paul's name, it shows we have _____ replaced Israel. We, the Body, are _____ a continuation of the Mosaic-Messianic Church. We are _____ an extension of the nation Israel. But, we are a _____ creature - the one new man, a brand-new entity called the Church Body of Christ.

II Corinthians 5:17 - Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Ephesians 2:15 - Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace;

*The mystery program is un_____ to Israel's prophetic program.

- c. Since Paul's apostleship and message involved God's transitioning _____ dealing with Israel (Jews) only _____ dealing with all nations (Gentiles), it was right for God to use a man who has _____ a Jewish nature (Saul) and Roman Gentile nature (Paul). Paul, a Roman and a Jew, is the perfect reflection of the Church _____.

*Isn't it amazing how God can have so much meaning in one name?

F. Paul's Continued Obsession

1. _____ suffering had transpired from 8:1 to 9:1. Saul had "made havoc of the church" (Messianic), persecuted "beyond measure" and "laying to waste" (Acts 8:3; Gal. 1:13).

Acts 9:1-2 - And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, Acts 9:2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

*We do not know how much terror and bloodshed Saul caused, but it must have been _____ believable. Saul worked day and night to stamp out "any of this way."

2. Verses 1-2 picture a man who is ____raged, heart-racing, threatening violence and murder with every breath.

*Saul wanted, and received, ____icial orders to go to Damascus and into the synagogues to find these turncoat Jews (followers of Christ), in order to enslave them....even have them _____.
Damascus was the old capital of Syria.

3. Remember, God is showing Israel that since she would not embrace Messiah, He would not permit them to keep salvation _____ the Gentiles. However, He would not be using them (Israel) to reach the world at this time.

God would by grace save Saul, the nation's _____ - but the Messianic Church's greatest _____emy.
Through Paul, God charts a new direction with a new message. God _____gins to reveal His hidden plan to His grace-converted Paul, Apostle to the Gentiles.

Acts 20:24 - But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.