

## THE BOOK OF ACTS | GOD'S REVELATION OF TRANSITION

### SESSION 30 | ACTS 9:19-31

#### ACTS 9:19-25 | SAUL'S MINISTRY IN DAMASCUS

- *Note: vv. 19-25 notes were also included on session 29.*
- Verses 19-20 –
  - These were no-doubt very dramatic days for **the disciples which were at Damascus** and the **synagogues** of Damascus. S
  - Saul was a well-known Jew who had brought persecution on followers of Jesus as the Christ, and now **straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues.**
    - Note that **he preached Christ** (not *Jesus*, as in modern versions).
    - His message was that *Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God*. Such a message is foundational to Christianity, but Jesus as Messiah is not the Gospel message (which is about Jesus as personal Savior).
- Verses 21-22 –
  - Once again, to the amazement of those of Damascus, Saul **confounded the Jews** by **proving that this is very Christ.**
  - Once again the KJV wording, while not typical of modern English, is *very accurate* in saying that Saul was **proving** (a logic word which speaks of *binding together* two ideas) the Messiahship of Jesus. This was Saul's primary goal in the synagogue, here and always.
- Verses 23-25 –
  - How **many days were fulfilled** before this happened? It looks like at least three years.
  - Verse 26 places this event before the return to Jerusalem.
  - Galatians 1:17-18 speaks of a three-year period of time in Arabia and Damascus.
  - 2 Corinthians 11:32-33 speaks of this same event, making mention of **Aretas the king** of the Nabatean empire that was over Damascus at the time. Petra, capital city of the Kingdom, is in *Arabia*, and after the fall of the Nabatean kingdom the area came under Roman control in the 2nd Century under the name Arabia Petraea.
  - This chronology takes us to 37-38AD, four to five years after Pentecost.

#### ACTS 9:26-31 | SAUL IN JERUSALEM AND BEYOND

- Verse 26 –
  - Saul is now three years after his conversion, and the year is approximately 38AD, five years after Pentecost. Note that in this and following verses we have no indication that *the ecclesia of Paul* (i.e.: the Age of Grace) has begun, even though we are five years beyond Pentecost.
  - The English word **assayed** means “to put to the test” and is a translation of a Greek coming from the root *πειρα* [peira], which is “to pierce.” Thus Saul “poked around trying to find a way to **join himself to the disciples**, who were not ready to receive him because they **believed not that he was a disciple.**
  - Note that according to Galatians 1:18-20 Paul strongly states that he was only in Jerusalem for 15 days, so the events of these verses were not over a long period of time.

- Verse 27 –
  - Barnabas (whom we had seen in chapter 1, with Matthias), brought him **to the apostles** (who are still in charge) and Barnabas shared with the apostles about the Damascus Road experience.
  - Barnabas shares that Saul **preached boldly...in the name of Jesus**, which we had previously learned in verse 22.
  - Note that the text has been clear that Saul only taught Jews (v. 22) and that his sermons were related to Jesus' Messiahship. Thus, after five years, the message of Pentecost has not changed, Saul is still not referred to as Paul (the name used in his post-mystery ministry), and Saul's message is one that aligns with Peter's (i.e.: a Kingdom gospel).
- Verses 28-29 –
  - Saul was **with them** both physically (the meaning of the text) and spiritually (the context of the text).
  - In his brief time there, he **disputed against the Grecians** (Saul being solidly in the *non-Grecian* way of thinking in his Judaism), who **went about to slay him**.
  - Once again, we see no indication that Saul was preaching anything other than the Kingdom message of the Apostles.
- Verse 30 –
  - Presumably **the brethren** is that *ecclesia of Peter* (i.e.: the "Little Flock").
  - Note that there is not even a hint that these brethren have any shock about Paul's mystery.
    - Why not? Because Paul is still Saul and the mystery has not yet been given.
    - When it is given, Paul and Peter will have a confrontation, but not at this point.
  - At this point, the Apostles **sent him forth to Tarsus** for his own safety. This aligns with Galatians 1:21 in which Saul says he went **into the regions of Syria and Cilicia**, as Tarsus was in Cilicia.
- Verse 31 –
  - Saul's departure brought about a period of **rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria**.
    - Note that this rest was in **the churches** (plural) rather than *the church* as stated in the modern texts (a change with Catholic overtones and found in Catholic texts).
    - Both the noun **churches** and the verb **were multiplied** are different in the versions created by academia based on their faulty assumptions.
  - It is very possible that Saul received *the mystery* of the church age just prior to leaving Jerusalem (or possibly shortly thereafter). Here is some evidence:
    - When Paul gives his testimony in Acts 22:[17-21](#), he spoke of being **in a trance** while he **prayed in the temple** and the Lord said **depart: for I will send thee far hence into the Gentiles**.
    - By Acts 15:[23](#), when Paul returns to Jerusalem (14 years later), there are churches throughout **Syria and Cilicia** who appear to be composed of uncircumcised Gentiles.