

NOON BIBLE STUDY: ACTS 9 (PART 1)

ACTS 9:1-9 - SAUL MEETS JESUS

SAUL - CP. ACTS 8:3 - BUT SAUL BEGAN RAVAGING THE CHURCH, ENTERING HOUSE AFTER HOUSE, AND DRAGGING OFF MEN AND WOMEN, HE WOULD PUT THEM IN PRISON.

SIGNIFICANCE OF DAMASCUS - DAMASCUS WAS 135 MILES (217 KM) NORTHEAST OF JERUSALEM, A SIX-DAY JOURNEY BY FOOT. SETTLED AS EARLY AS THE SECOND MILLENNIUM B.C., DAMASCUS WAS AN OASIS ON THE BORDER OF THE ARABIAN DESERT **AND ON THE MAIN ROUTE FROM MESOPOTAMIA TO EGYPT**. THE NABATEAN KING ARETAS IV MAINTAINED AN ETHNARCH (I.E., GOVERNOR) IN DAMASCUS (2 COR. 11:32). ALTHOUGH THE MODERN CITY OF DAMASCUS STANDS ATOP THE ANCIENT REMAINS, ONE CAN STILL SEE THE "STREET CALLED STRAIGHT" (ACTS 9:11) RUNNING EAST TO WEST WITH ITS EAST GATE AND MONUMENTAL ARCH. ALSO VISIBLE ARE THE ANCIENT THEATER AND THE CONCENTRIC COURTS OF ITS TEMPLE TO JUPITER (NOW REPLACED BY A MOSQUE). JEWISH PRESENCE IN DAMASCUS (ASSUMED BY THE MENTION OF SYNAGOGUES IN VV. 2, 20) IS CONFIRMED IN JOSEPHUS'S RECORD THAT MANY THOUSANDS OF JEWISH PEOPLE WERE KILLED IN DAMASCUS DURING THE TIME OF THE FIRST JEWISH REVOLT (A.D. 66—73; SEE JEWISH WAR 2.559—561). (ESV STUDY BIBLE NOTE ON ACTS 9:3)

ACTS 9:10-19A - ANANIAS & SAUL

V. 10 - ANANIAS WAS A DISCIPLE (ALREADY) IN DAMASCUS. THE GOSPEL HAD EITHER REACHED DAMASCUS OR PERHAPS ANANIAS WAS A CONVERT FROM A PILGRIMAGE TO JERUSALEM.

ACTS 9:19B-22 - SAUL PROCLAIMING JESUS AS SON OF GOD

SAUL HAD A KNOWLEDGE OF THE SCRIPTURE AND NOW HAD EXPERIENCED THE POWER OF GOD AS WELL.

ACTS 9:23-25 - SAUL'S LIFE THREATENED. SAUL'S ESCAPE.

V. 23 - "...MANY DAYS HAD ELAPSED"

GALATIANS 1:11-24 - ADDITIONAL DETAILS OF STORY.

SAUL IMMEDIATELY STARTED TO DECLARE THAT JESUS WAS THE "SON OF GOD" (ACTS 9:19-20). THEN HE TOOK UP TO 3 YEARS AWAY FROM THE WORLD TO SORT THINGS OUT. THEN AFTER THAT PERIOD HE RETURNS TO JERUSALEM AND MEETS WITH DISCIPLES FOR THE FIRST TIME.

MAP KEY - AS PAUL APPROACHED DAMASCUS TO ARREST FOLLOWERS OF THE WAY, JESUS APPEARED TO HIM (1). GALATIANS 1:17 MAKES IT CLEAR THAT SOON AFTER THIS PAUL SPENT TIME IN ARABIA (2, 3) BEFORE GOING TO MEET CHURCH LEADERS IN JERUSALEM (4). WHEN SOME BELIEVERS LEARNED OF A PLOT TO KILL PAUL IN JERUSALEM, THEY TOOK HIM TO CAESAREA, AND HE RETURNED TO HIS HOMETOWN OF TARSUS (5).



SAUL'S CONVERSION RECOUNTED

ACTS 22:3-21

ACTS 26:2-18

ACTS 9:26-30 - SAUL'S INTRODUCTION TO DISCIPLES

V. 27 - BARNABAS (ACTS 4:36-37) STANDS UP FOR SAUL.

ACTS 9:31 - RESULT OF SAUL'S CONVERSION