



Acts of the Apostles Teacher's Outline

MODULE 4/6

IV. The transition to the Gentiles - Acts 9-12

A. The conversion of Saul (9:1-19)

1. His last journey as the persecutor (1-2)
 - a. His spirit
 - i. Breathing threatening and slaughter
 - b. His destination
 - i. Damascus
 - ii. 140 miles north east
 - c. His purpose
 - i. Bring those of 'this way' bond to Jerusalem
2. His encounter with Jesus (3-7)
 - a. Where?
 - i. On the way to Damascus
 - b. How?
 - i. A heavenly light
 - ii. A voice from heaven
 - iii. Responses to Saul's questions
 - iv. All heard the voice but only Saul understood
- v7; Acts 22:9; John 12:28-30
 - c. Why?
 - i. To make Saul a witness and minister
- v 16; Acts 26:16-18
3. Saul in Damascus (8-19)
 - a. Saul was blinded
 - i. He wanted to use his eyes to ferret out Christians
 - ii. God has blinded him temporarily
 - iii. When enlightened, Saul will see things in a new light
 - b. He was helpless
 - i. The agressor now needs help to find his way
 - ii. He finds shelter from the ones he wanted to imprison
 - iii. Instead of persecution, he now prays
 - c. He was restored
 - i. He fasted 3 days and then received food
 - ii. He was baptized (Acts 22:16)
 - iii. He fellowshipped with disciples

B. Saul's early ministry (9:19-30)

1. Damascus (19-25)

- a. He proclaims Christ in the synagogues
 - i. Hearers were amazed (21)
 - ii. Jews were confounded (22)
 - iii. No record of any conversions
- b. Saul in Arabia
 - i. Probably training by God - Galatians 1:17
 - ii. How long? - not recorded
- c. His return to Damascus
 - i. The persecutor is now persecuted (23-25)
 - ii. Escape in a basket (cf Joshua 2:15)
 - iii. After 3 years, went to Jerusalem (Gal 1:18)

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2. Jerusalem (26-29)

- a. The past
 - i. His first visit since he left 3 years ago
 - ii. At that time, he had letters to persecute Christians
- b. The reception
 - i. Hated by the Jews
 - ii. Held in suspect by his brethren
 - iii. Commended by Barnabas, son of exhortation
 - iv. Visited Peter (Gal 1:1; 15-18)
- c. His activities
 - i. His preaching aroused opposition and persecution
 - ii. No record of any conversion
- d. His exit (?)
 - i. He was driven out by his enemies
 - ii. He who once forced Christians to be scattered from Jerusalem is now forced out of the city
 - iii. He was led by the Lord (Acts 22:17-21)
 - iv. Like in Damascus, he was helped by Christians
 - v. Finally, Saul returned home to Tarsus

3. Back home in Tarsus (30; Galatians 1:21-24)

- a. Probably his last visit to Tarsus
- b. Continued to preach Christ
- c. Probably converted his relatives (Romans 16:7, 11, 21)
- d. Probably had vision of paradise at this period (2 Cor. 12ff)
 - i. 2 Corinthians written around A.D. 57
 - ii. Vision came 14 years before, ie A.D. 43
 - iii. This was the time when Saul was in Tarsus

4. Discussion on Saul's conversion and faith

- a. Saul's experience
 - i. Saul had a dramatic conversion
 - ii. The aftermath was as expected - opposition and doubt
 - iii. There is no record of any conversions
 - iv. He relied on goodwill of Christians to survive

- v. Finally he returned home to Tarsus where he was born
- b. Discussion questions
 - i. Would this be the end of Saul's short-lived faith?
 - ii. Do you know of some faith that is similar?
 - iii. What made Saul's faith different?
 - hint: Galatians 1:17

C. The miracle at Lydda (9:31-35)

1. Time
 - a. Period of peace and prosperity
 - b. Partly due to the conversion of the chief persecutor, Saul
2. The person God use - Peter
3. The person in need - Aeneas
 - a. Probably a Christian
 - b. Invalid - 'had kept his bed'
 - c. Long standing - 8 years
 - d. Incurable by human means
 - i. Paralysis is beyond the power science to cure
4. The nature of the miracle
 - a. Divine - Jesus healeth thee
 - b. Instantaneous - straightway
 - c. Complete - he arose
5. The results of the miracle
 - a. Cities turned to the Lord
 - b. Lydda was a town between Jerusalem and Joppa
 - c. Sharon is a level country between Lydda and Caesarea
 - d. A general conversion of these inhabitants followed the Lord

D. Dorcas (9:36-43)

1. The life of Dorcas
 - a. Beautiful name
 - i. Meaning gazelle or antelope
 - ii. Known for its agreeable form and graceful motion
 - iii. Hebrew image of female loveliness
 - b. Beautiful soul
 - i. A disciple of Christ
 - ii. Adorned with pity
 - iii. She considered the poor (Psalm 41:1; 1 Peter 3:1-4)
 - c. Beautiful dresses
 - i. Her pity was one that led to action
 - ii. Full of good works and almsdeeds (1 Tim. 2:9)
2. The death of Dorcas
 - a. Tenderness - they washed her.. (1 Kings 17:19)

- b. True mourners - people who she helped
- c. Comfort - from apostle Peter
- d. Display - not trophies but coats which Dorcas made for them

3. The resurrection of Dorcas

- a. How she was raised
 - i. In solitude - modelled after Jesus (Luke 8:54)
 - ii. By prayer
 - iii. With a command (Luke 8:54)
 - iv. With a helping hand (Mark 1:31)
- b. Why was she raised
 - i. To confirm the word (Mark 16:18)
- c. The effect of this miracle
 - i. Many believed in the Lord

E. The conversion of Cornelius (10:1-48)

1. 8 years have passed since Jesus gave the great commission
 - a. This is the record of the first gentile conversion

2. The convert, Cornelius

- a. Roman by race
- b. Soldier by profession
- c. Devout towards God
- d. Benevolent towards men

3. How he was converted

- a. Cornelius' vision - send for Peter
- b. Peter's vision - go with them
- c. Cornelius' speech
- d. Peter's speech
 - i. Universality of God's love (34, 35)
 - ii. Career of Jesus (36-41)
 - iii. Great commission (42, 43)

4. The features of this conversion

- a. Special
 - i. Miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit (44-47)
 - ii. Other other recorded incident - Acts 2:2ff
- b. General
 - i. Cornelius believed, having heard (Romans 10:17)
 - ii. He repented (Luke 24:47)
 - iii. He was baptized (48)

F. Peter before the Jerusalem Church (11:1-18)

1. The complaint against Peter (1-3)

- a. Occasion - The report of gentiles receiving the word
- b. By whom - Jewish Christians
- c. Not objecting

- i. Peter preaching to gentiles
- ii. Peter baptizing gentiles
- iii. The salvation of gentiles
- d. Objection - Peter did not subject gentiles to circumcision

2. Peter's defence (4-17)

- a. His vision-experience
- b. The vision of Cornelius
- c. The outpouring of the Spirit at Cornelius' house
- d. 6 brethren were able to testify to the above (12)

3. Result (18)

- a. Negative - they held their peace
- b. Positive - they glorified God
- c. It is always good for brethren to hear and uphold each other

G. The church at Antioch (11:19-30)

1. The city of Antioch

- a. This is the Antioch of Asia
- b. Founded by Seleucus Nicator in 300 B.C.
- c. Capital of Syria, gateway to the east
- d. 3rd largest city in the world
- e. 400,000 population

2. The start of the church (19-21)

- a. Founders
 - i. Christians who have fled persecution
 - ii. Men of cyprus and Cyrene
 - iii. Grecian Jews
- b. One of the greatest churches of all history
 - i. The first gentile church
 - ii. The first place where disciples were called Christians
 - iii. The first systematic missions outreach
 - iv. New centre of Christian activities
 - Jerusalem now fades into the background
 - v. A model that PP is patterning after

3. Help and support from Jerusalem church (22-26)

- a. Jerusalem sent Barnabas (22)
 - i. A good man (23, 24)
 - ii. An apostle (Acts 14:14)
 - iii. Kind hearted (Acts 4:26)
 - vi. No better person more suitable or qualified
- b. Barnabas called Saul
 - i. Shared with Saul in this new, exciting work
 - Did he call Saul out of retirement?
 - ii. Partnership, team ministry
 - No preacher jealousy
- c. Jerusalem sent more teachers (27)

4. The keys to Antioch's success (27-30)
 - a. Good encouraging preachers
 - i. Men like Barnabas and Saul
 - ii. Preachers can be assets or liabilities
 - b. A membership keen on the word
 - i. Many teachers (Acts 13:1)
 - c. A benevolent church (28-30)
 - i. Ready, willing to help
 - ii. Everyone have a part; not just a few
 - d. A missionary church
 - i. Paul's first missionary journey (Acts 13ff)
 - ii. Paul's second missionary journey (Acts 15:36ff)
 - iii. Paul's third missionary journey (Acts 18:23)
 - estimated 200,000 Christians at Antioch
 - half of the entire city population

5. Lessons we can learn:
 - a. The church at Jerusalem faded away
 - because they had no sign of missionary spirit
 - b. The church at Antioch grew
 - because they were strong in many areas
 - c. The church in Jerusalem sent many workers to Antioch
 - which the congregation welcomed and used

H. The fourth Jewish Persecution (12:1-19)

1. The persecutor: Herod the king (1)
 - a. By blood an Idumean, descendant of Esau
 - b. By religion a Jew
 - i. During the period of the Maccabees (in between Testaments) Edomites were forced to adopt the law
 - c. A ruler
 - i. Herod is family name
 - ii. Proper name is Herod Agrippa I
 - d. Infamous background
 - i. Herod the Great murdered babies of Bethlehem
 - ii. Herod Antipas beheaded John the Baptist
 - iii. Now, a king persecutes the church
2. The victims (2-6)
 - a. James
 - i. One of the inner circle of Christ (Matthew 26:37)
 - ii. the first apostolic martyr
 - b. Peter
 - i. Imprisoned to please the Jews
 - ii. Purpose - to execute him after the passover
3. Peter's deliverance (5-11)
 - a. The church prayed for Peter
 - b. An angel of the Lord delivered Peter

4. Effect of the deliverance (12-19)
 - a. Peter went to the house of Mary, mother of John
 - b. Believers prayed for Peter's release
but did not believe it when Peter was released!
 - c. Believers were astonished
 - d. The enemies were confused
 - f. Peter's jailors were put to death by Herod

5. Lessons we can glean:
 - a. The Lord is sovereign
 - i. The Lord allowed James to be martyred
 - ii. The Lord delivered Peter
 - iii. Could it be - every man is immortal until his work is done?

I. Herod's horrible death (12:20-24)

1. Occasion (20-24)
 - a. Reception of embassies from Tyre and Sidon
 - i. Herod was displeased with these cities
 - b. A set day
 - i. Second day of public games
 - ii. Celebrated in honour of Claudius, the emperor
 - c. Herod's appearance
 - i. Fully suited in royal apparel
 - ii. Sat on his throne and spoke
 - iii. Flattery - voice of a god, not man

2. The cause (22-23)
 - a. An angel of God smote Herod
 - i. 2 Kings 19:35
 - b. Worms started to devour Herod

3. The reason (23)
 - i. Herod stole God of His glory

4. Footnote
 - a. According to Josephus
 - i. This disease was an acute disorder of the bowels
 - ii. It smote him with sudden and violent pain
 - iii. Immediately Herod was carried out of the theatre
 - iv. Herod died in 5 days
 - v. His bowels were perforated by intestinal worms
 - b. When a man dies
 - i. The body in the grave is eaten by worms
 - ii. Herod's body fed worms while he was alive

5. Comparison of Herod's and James' deaths
 - a. James died by the violence of man
- Herod died by the judgement of God

- b. James was mature in grace
 - Herold was mature in sin
- c. James was lamented by the church
 - Herold was detested by his subjects
- d. James ascended to glory
 - Herold went to his own place

6. Lessons we can glean:

- a. God will avenge the blood of His martyrs
 - i. Deut. 32:43, Luke 18:7
- b. It is vain to go against God
 - i. Isaiah 27:4
- c. Pride goes before destruction
 - i. Proverb 16:18, Isaiah 28:1, Matthew 23:12
- d. God's word will ultimately triumph over His foes
 - i. Isaiah 11:9
- e. Christians are on the winning side, we can lose only
 - i. If we give up
 - ii. If we change sides