

Paul's Conversion and Visits to Jerusalem

ACTS

Acts 9:1-31

Conversion¹

9:1 But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest 9:2 and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

9:3 Now as he journeyed he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed about him. 9:4 And he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" 9:5 And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" And he said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting; 9:6 but rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do." 9:7 The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one.

Damascus²

9:8 Saul arose from the ground; and when his eyes were opened, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. 9:9 And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

9:10 Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Anani'as. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Anani'as." And he said, "Here I am, Lord." 9:11 And the Lord said to him, "Rise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for a man of Tarsus named Saul; for behold, he is praying, 9:12 and he has seen a man named Anani'as come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight." 9:13 But Anani'as answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to thy saints at Jerusalem; 9:14 and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call upon thy name." 9:15 But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; 9:16 for I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name." 9:17 So Anani'as departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said,

PAUL

Gal 1:13-24

1:13 For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it; 1:14 and I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers.

1:15 But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through his grace, 1:16 was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles,

I did not confer with flesh and blood, 1:17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me,

ACTS

“Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came, has sent me that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” 9:18 And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized, 9:19 and took food and was strengthened.

For several days he was with the disciples at Damascus. 9:20 And in the synagogues immediately he proclaimed Jesus, saying, “He is the Son of God.” 9:21 And all who heard him were amazed, and said, “Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem of those who called on this name? And he has come here for this purpose, to bring them bound before the chief priests.” 9:22 But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ.

Escape from Damascus

9:23 When many days had passed, the Jews plotted to kill him, 9:24 but their plot became known to Saul. They were watching the gates day and night, to kill him; 9:25 but his disciples took him by night and let him down over the wall, lowering him in a basket.

Jerusalem 1st visit³

9:26 And when he had come to Jerusalem he attempted to join the disciples; and they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple. 9:27 But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared to them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who spoke to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus. 9:28 So he went in and out among them at Jerusalem, 9:29 preaching boldly in the name of the Lord. And he spoke and disputed against the Hellenists; but they were seeking to kill him. 9:30 And when the brethren knew it, they brought him down to Caesare’a, and sent him off to Tarsus.

9:31 So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Sama’ria had peace and was built up; and walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort

PAUL**Arabia**

but I went away into Arabia;

and again I returned to Damascus.

2 Corinthians 11:32-33

11:32 At Damascus, the governor under King Ar’etas guarded the city of Damascus in order to seize me, 11:33 but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped his hands.

Gal 1:18-24

1:18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and remained with him fifteen days. 1:19 But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord’s brother. 1:20 (In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie!)

1:21 Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cili’cia.

1:22 And I was still not known by sight to the churches of Christ in Judea; 1:23 they only heard it said, “He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith he

ACTS

of the Holy Spirit it was multiplied.

Acts 11:27-30

Jerusalem 2nd visit

11:27 Now in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. 11:28 And one of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world; and this took place in the days of Claudius. 11:29 And the disciples determined, every one according to his ability, to send relief to the brethren who lived in Judea; 11:30 and they did so, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.

Acts 15:4-29

Jerusalem 3rd visit

15:4 When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they declared all that God had done with them. 15:5 But some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees rose up, and said, "It is necessary to circumcise them, and to charge them to keep the law of Moses."

Peter:

15:6 The apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider this matter. 15:7 And after there had been much debate, Peter rose and said to them, "Brethren, you know that in the early days God made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. 15:8 And God who knows the heart bore witness to them, giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us; 15:9 and he made no distinction between us and them, but cleansed their hearts by faith. 15:10 Now therefore why do you make trial of God by putting a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? 15:11 But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will."

PAUL

once tried to destroy." 1:24 And they glorified God because of me.

Gal 2:1-10

2:1 Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me. 2:2 I went up by revelation; and I laid before them (but privately before those who were of repute) the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, lest somehow I should be running or had run in vain. 2:3 But even Titus, who was with me, was not compelled to be circumcised, though he was a Greek. 2:4 But because of false brethren secretly brought in, who slipped in to spy out our freedom which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage — 2:5 to them we did not yield submission even for a moment, that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.

2:6 And from those who were reputed to be something (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality) — those, I say, who were of repute added nothing to me; 2:7 but on the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised 2:8 (for he who worked through Peter for the mission to the circumcised worked through me also for the Gentiles), 2:9 and when they perceived the grace that was given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised;

ACTS**PAUL****Paul:**

15:12 And all the assembly kept silence; and they listened to Barnabas and Paul as they related what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles.

James:

15:13 After they finished speaking, James replied, "Brethren, listen to me. 15:14 Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. 15:15 And with this the words of the prophets agree, as it is written,

15:16 *'After this I will return,
and I will rebuild the dwelling of David, which has fallen;
I will rebuild its ruins,
and I will set it up,*

15:17 *that the rest of men may seek the Lord,
and all the Gentiles who are called by my name,*

15:18 *says the Lord, who has made these things known from of old.'*

15:19 Therefore my judgment is that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God, 15:20 but should write to them to abstain from the pollutions of idols and from unchastity and from what is strangled and from blood. 15:21 For from early generations Moses has had in every city those who preach him, for he is read every sabbath in the synagogues."

2:10 only they would have us remember the poor, which very thing I was eager to do.

Decision:

15:22 Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men from among them and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They sent Judas called Barsab'bas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren, 15:23 with the following letter:

"The brethren, both the apostles and the elders, to the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cili'cia, greeting.

15:24 Since we have heard that some persons from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your minds, although we gave them no instructions, 15:25 it has seemed good to us, having come to one accord, to choose men and send them to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, 15:26 men who have risked their lives for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. 15:27 We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will tell you the same things by word of mouth. 15:28 For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: 15:29 that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from unchastity. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell."

Praescriptio: 15:23

Superscriptio
Adscriptio

Salutatio

Body of letter: 15:24-29a

It seemed good to us...24-27

It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and us...28-29a

Conclusio: 15:29b

ENDNOTES:

¹Compare Acts 22:1-11 in a speech of Paul:

22:1 “Brethren and fathers, hear the defense which I now make before you.”

22:2 And when they heard that he addressed them in the Hebrew language, they were the more quiet. And he said:

22:3 “I am a Jew, born at Tarsus in Cili’cia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gama’li-el, educated according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as you all are this day. 22:4 I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women, 22:5 as the high priest and the whole council of elders bear me witness. From them I received letters to the brethren, and I journeyed to Damascus to take those also who were there and bring them in bonds to Jerusalem to be punished.

22:6 “As I made my journey and drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone about me. 22:7 And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?’ 22:8 And I answered, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And he said to me, ‘I am Jesus of Nazareth whom you are persecuting.’ 22:9 Now those who were with me saw the light but did not hear the voice of the one who was speaking to me. 22:10 And I said, ‘What shall I do, Lord?’ And the Lord said to me, ‘Rise, and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all that is appointed for you to do.’ 22:11 And when I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me, and came into Damascus.

Compare Acts 26:4-18 in another speech of Paul:

26:4 “My manner of life from my youth, spent from the beginning among my own nation and at Jerusalem, is known by all the Jews. 26:5 They have known for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that according to the strictest party of our religion I have lived as a Pharisee. 26:6 And now I stand here on trial for hope in the promise made by God to our fathers, 26:7 to which our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly worship night and day. And for this hope I am accused by Jews, O king! 26:8 Why is it thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead?

26:9 “I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things in opposing the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 26:10 And I did so in Jerusalem; I not only shut up many of the saints in prison, by authority from the chief priests, but when they were put to death I cast my vote against them. 26:11 And I punished them often in all the synagogues and tried to make them blaspheme; and in raging fury against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities.

26:12 “Thus I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. 26:13 At midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining round me and those who journeyed with me. 26:14 And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It hurts you to kick against the goads.’ 26:15 And I said, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. 26:16 But rise and stand upon your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you to serve and bear witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you, 26:17 delivering you from the people and from the Gentiles — to whom I send you 26:18 to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’

²Compare Acts 22:12-16 in a speech of Paul:

22:12 “And one Anani’as, a devout man according to the law, well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, 22:13 came to me, and standing by me said to me, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight.’ And in that very hour

I received my sight and saw him. 22:14 And he said, `The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to see the Just One and to hear a voice from his mouth; 22:15 for you will be a witness for him to all men of what you have seen and heard. 22:16 And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on his name.'

Compare Acts 26:19-20 in another speech of Paul:

26:19 "Wherefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, 26:20 but declared first to those at Damascus, then at Jerusalem and throughout all the country of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God and perform deeds worthy of their repentance.

³Compare Acts 22:17-21 in a speech of Paul:

22:17 "When I had returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance 22:18 and saw him saying to me, `Make haste and get quickly out of Jerusalem, because they will not accept your testimony about me.' 22:19 And I said, `Lord, they themselves know that in every synagogue I imprisoned and beat those who believed in thee. 22:20 And when the blood of Stephen thy witness was shed, I also was standing by and approving, and keeping the garments of those who killed him.' 22:21 And he said to me, `Depart; for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.'"