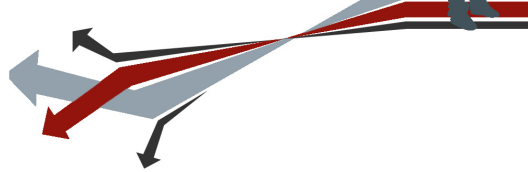


You Will Be My WITNESSES



of Saul Acts 9:1-31

Before getting started, take a look at the Acts Timeline to get an overview of what has taken place so far and how much time has passed since Jesus' death and resurrection.

In chapter 9, Luke returns to the character of Saul who was first introduced at the stoning of Stephen (7:57-8:1). Saul was later known as the apostle Paul.

9:1-9 Saul meets the risen Christ

- 1) Do we have indications that this was a literal encounter with Jesus or a vision / dream?
- 2) Read this passage and then compare it to Paul's own account in Gal. 1:11-17. What do we learn from Paul's account about his status within Judaism and his motivation for persecuting the church?
- 3) In verse 5 Jesus says, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting." If Saul was persecuting the church, in what sense was he persecuting Jesus? What does this say about the relationship between Jesus and the church? What are some implications for our own relationship to the church of Jesus?

9:10-16 Ananias receives a vision

4) God invites Ananias to welcome a sworn enemy of the church. (This Ananias, obviously, is different from the one who was killed in Acts 5.) The rationale for this act, given in vv. 15-16, is that Saul is God's chosen instrument. In other words, Saul's salvation had a purpose far outside his own life. Is everyone's salvation like this, or only certain ones who are called into explicit mission? If you are in Christ, why are you saved?

9:17-19 Ananias and Saul

- 5) Why, after such a dramatic intervention in history, does Jesus use Ananias to complete the call process for Saul? Why didn't Jesus appear to him once again after three days to confirm it?
- 6) Notice that Ananias addresses Saul as "brother Saul." Would you have addressed him that way? Who would you have a difficult time naming as a "brother/sister" in Christ in your own life?
- 7) The Spirit's arrival in Saul results in "something like scales" falling from his eyes, restoring his sight. What was the purpose of Saul's blindness (and fasting) for these three days? Mt. 12:40?

9:20-31 Saul's ministry in Damascus

It's a rough first call for Saul. Does his experience here indicate that he was raw and tactless in the early days, causing more trouble than anything else (so that his absence resulted in peace for the region -- Acts 9:31)? Or does it indicate that he was up against significant opposition and did the necessary work of tilling the soil (so that his absence resulted in peace for the region -- Acts 9:31)? What can we learn, really, about our own ministry or work by looking at results?