

Bible Study 30 – Acts 9:10-19 – Saul is enlightened!

Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, “Ananias.” And he said, “Here I am, Lord.” 11 And the Lord said to him, “Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, 12 and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.” 13 But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem. 14 And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name.” 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 children of Israel. 16 For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.” 17 So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” 18 And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized; 19 and taking food, he was strengthened.

1. Ananias was instructed by the Lord as a prelude to Saul’s enlightenment: Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, “Ananias.” And he said, “Here I am, Lord.” 11 And the Lord said to him, “Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, 12 and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.”

a) Ananias is a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ...

b) Ananias is a dutiful minister of the Lord Jesus Christ... in his response, ‘here I am, Lord’... ready to receive God’s word...

c) Ananias is directed by the Lord Jesus Christ... ‘rise and go’... specific instructions...

2. Ananias is initially and understandably somewhat alarmed by the Lord’s revelation: But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem. 14 And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name.”

a) Ananias has heard about Saul’s vehement and violent campaign against followers of Jesus in Jerusalem...

b) Ananias has been prewarned that Saul has secured permission from the authorities in Jerusalem to persecute and prosecute Christians in Damascus...

c) Ananias therefore wisely brings his concerns to the Lord and seeks reaffirmation...

3. Ananias is reassured and informed by the Lord concerning Saul: 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 children of Israel. 16 For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.”

a) The Lord responds to Ananias prayer... God answers prayer...

b) The Lord reveals that Saul is now the Lord’s chosen instrument to proclaim Christ’s gospel near and far and to the high and lowly... to Jew and Gentile...

c) The Lord relates that Saul will suffer for the sake of Jesus, just like those he formerly mistreated and abused... he will himself become a victim of hatred towards Christ and his gospel of love as it was seen as an existential threat to the status quo...

4. Ananias is an instrument of the Lord Jesus in Saul’s enlightenment: So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”

a) Ananias reliably trusted and obeyed the Lord Jesus... and his ministry bears fruit...

b) Ananias received Saul as a brother in the Lord Jesus... despite Saul's background of malice and violence against the faithful...

c) Ananias revealed his mission of blessing to Saul...

5. Ananias imparts the Lord's blessing to Saul: And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized; 19 and taking food, he was strengthened.

a) The transformation in Saul is instantaneous after Ananias lays hands upon him... His sight restored... 'I once was blind but now I see'... from darkness to light...

b) The transference of Saul is signed and sealed in the sacrament of baptism...

c) The taking of food for strength and sustenance acts as a prelude to service in the cause and kingdom of the Lord Jesus...

Questions

1. What place has mercy and forgiveness in the Christian life and witness?

2. In what ways do we demonstrate our trust and obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ?

3. How do we seek enlightenment in God's will?

4. What does this passage teach us about the place and purpose of Christ's church?