

The Journey That Changed Paul's Life

Acts 9:1-3

Introduction:

- A. Three years journey changed Paul's life forever.
 - 1. Begins in Jerusalem - threatening disciples (v.1); Ends in Jerusalem - joining disciples (v. 28).
 - 2. From Jerusalem, Damascus, Arabia, Damascus, and back to Jerusalem.
- B. Journey highlighted by contact and association with some important *persons*.

Discussion:

I. The High Priest In Jerusalem. (vv. 1,2)

- A. He was there as a *misguided religious worker*. (Cf. 1 Tim. 1:13)
 - 1. Conscientious. (cf. Acts 23:1; 26:9).
 - 2. Zealous. (cf. Phil. 3:6)
 - 3. Legal. (v. 2; Acts 26:12; Phil. 3:6).
 - 4. Dangerous (v. 1; Acts 8:1; Gal. 1:13)
- B. He has many counterparts in church today — make havoc of church.
 - 1. In and out of the church.
 - 2. Like race car with souped up engine, but without steering or brakes.

II. Jesus Christ On The Damascus Road. (vv. 3-7).

- A. The three questions asked on the road.
 - 1. Jesus asks, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"
 - a. To persecute disciples is to persecute Christ. (Mt. 25:40).
 - b. To persecute church or "the Way" is persecute Christ. (Acts 22:4; Gal. 1:13).
 - 2. Saul asked, "Who are You, Lord?", but it does not mean he was saved.
 - 3. Saul asked, "Lord, what do You want me to do?"
 - a. The Lord's answer: "Arise and go into the city..."
 - b. Not Lord's will to save people by direct appearance (cf. 2 Cor. 4:7; Rom. 10:6-8).
- B. The purpose of the appearance. (Acts 26:16; cf. 1 Cor 9:1)

III. Ananias In Damascus. (vv. 10-19).

- A. Ananias, not the Lord, told Saul what he must do to be saved. (Acts 22:16; cf. 9:11,18).
- B. Saul did not act saved until after Ananias spoke to him and he was baptized. (v. 9,19).

IV. The Disciples In Damascus and Jerusalem. (vv. 19-28).

- A. With the disciples twice at Damascus. (cf. Gal. 1:17).
 - 1. Grew spiritually. (v. 22).
 - 2. Helped him. (vv. 23-25).
- B. Returns to Jerusalem and joins disciples. (vv. 26-28).
 - 1. Not trying to become a disciple, already one. (cf. Mt. 28:18-20).
 - a. Already in universal church. (cf. Acts 2:47).
 - b. Not automatically member of local church at Jerusalem.
 - 2. Fulfilling obligation to work with other disciples.
 - a. To assemble together. (Heb. 10:25).
 - b. To work and worship together. (cf. Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:20; Eph. 5:19)
 - 3. Not offended by disciples' verifying his credentials.
 - a. Disciples may "receive" or "reject" others. (Cf. Rom. 14:1; Tit. 3:10)
 - b. Disciples do not need "No questions asked" fellowship.
 - (1) May ask for and receive recommendations. (v. 27, 28); cf. Rm. 16:1-2).
 - (2) Should be careful who ask — These asked Barnabas, not plotters (cf. v. 23)

Conclusion:

- A. You can have your sins washed away just like Saul did.
- B. You can work faithfully with other disciples, just like Paul did.