

Acts of the Holy Spirit  
“*God of the Impossible*” – Series

~ LET'S PRAY ~

NOTE TAKERS...

- I've titled today's message: **“The Evidence of Change.”**
  - READ (Acts 9:17-22).

~ INTRO ~

NOW...

- As we begin our study today...
  - There has been a big change WITH the persecution of the church.
- **Saul** the chief instigator of persecution... has come to faith in Jesus.

AND THE CHURCH...

- In the surrounding areas... are not sure what to think...
  - When it comes to trusting him.

SAUL...

- Persecuted the church for nearly 3-years... <sup>1</sup>
  - And in an instant... his encounter with Christ changed him.
- Jesus told Ananias that Saul *“is a chosen vessel of Mine”* (Acts 9:15).

SO... CHRISTIAN...

- As you read your Bible... remember what God has given us.
  - A written document that tells the big picture of **His story**.

RATHER...

- We have the main story line that continues God's narrative thru time.

IN (Acts 9)...

- We've seen a supernatural work of God...
  - Followed by basic ministry!

**HERE'S A FEW THINGS WE CAN LEARN TODAY:**

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<sup>1</sup> Swindoll, Charles R.. Insights on Acts copyright © 2016. (Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary Book 5) (p. 261). Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.. Kindle Edition.

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**IDEA #1 – MOVING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION:** (vv.17-22)

AFTER WE READ ABOUT SAUL’S CONVERSION.

- God recorded the very practical advancement of ministry.
  - We have a picture of an older believer...
    - Wrestling to obey God (Anaias)...
      - As he steps out to serve a younger believer (Saul).

REMEMBER...

- Saul was 28 - 31 yrs. old at this point.
  - And... some think this Ananias...
    - Was a leader in the church at Damascus at the time. <sup>2</sup>

**CHECK THIS OUT...**

- With a simple observation we learn...
  - In (vv.10-12) God was at work on both sides of the meeting...
    - Between Saul & Ananias.

IN A VISION...

- Ananias was told to visit Saul...
  - AND in a vision Saul was told ABOUT a visit from Ananias.

SO... **THE LESSON IS...**

- When God calls us to step out...
  - We can trust that He has already prepared the details...
    - On the other side.

NOW LOOKING AT (vv.17-22)...

- Once again... we’re reading about the power of God at work...
  - In the life of repentant sinner.

SAUL...

- Is healed by God & filled with the Holy Spirit (v.17).
  - Baptized in (v.18).
  - In (v.19) he spent a few days with the disciples at Damascus.

**NOW... FOR YOU BIBLE STUDENTS...**

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<sup>2</sup> Information sourced from BibleAsk.org © 2023. Sourced on 09/16/23 from link: <https://bibleask.org/ananias-new-testament/>

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- Take note here!

BETWEEN (v.19) & (v.-20)...

- There are a few opinions about what happened with Saul here.

**Option #1** – Chuck Smith (et al) teaches **between** these two verses...

- There is a gap of 3-years as seen in (Gal. 1:15-19).

**Option #2** – Charles Swindoll (et al) teaches that between...

- (Acts 9:23) “many days.”
- (Gal 1:17) “went away to Arabia.”
- (Gal 1:17) “returned once more to Damascus.”
- (Acts 9:24-25) escaped from Damascus.

➤ All these events take place within 3-years.

TODAY I’M TEACHING FROM **Option #1**.

- Because Saul was so heavy into the Law...
  - That any message of grace thru Jesus needed instruction.

AND JUST LIKE IN SEVERAL OTHER PLACES...

- The Bible skips timeframes without notice.

IN (Acts)...

- We’re given a picture of 30-years... (thru snap-shot narratives)...
  - So we can capture **the broader story** of how the church started.

NOW...

- It’s certain that Paul received both (Galatians) & (Romans)...
  - During his 3-years in Arabia... as he was taught by the Lord.

AND... (**I believe**)...

- That the message he preached.

IN... (Romans)

- i. The Sin of man – all have fallen short.
- ii. Justification thru Christ (salvation).
- iii. Sanctification (learning how to walk w/ Jesus).
- iv. Faithfulness of God.

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- v. Duty & service of man as a response to God.

IN... (Galatians)

- i. Justification was by faith apart from the law.
- ii. The rule of the believers life is grace not law.
- iii. He presents the life of a person justified by faith in Christ.

BUT IN THE END...

- Just understand that Saul was a changed man...
  - Who now preached GRACE over LAW.

**IDEA #2 – PROBLEMS WHILE PREACHING:** (vv.23-29)

SAUL WAS A CHANGED MAN...

- In both **Mission & Message**.

YET... THERE WERE MANY PEOPLE...

- Who didn't believe he was a changed man – they doubted his conversion!

SO...

- I think it's helpful to highlight some simple truth here.
  - So OUR **mission & message** is NOT lost.

TRUE REPENTANCE...

- Is NOT just to turn from sin... ONLY to turn back to sin.
  - That's not faith!!!

**THE POINT OF REPENTANCE...**

- Is to turn from sin ... as we come to Jesus...
  - AND our life continues to turn from sin... as we follow Jesus.

BEFORE JESUS...

- I was stuck in MY sin...
  - AND spiritual dead... to the reality of living apart from God.

SAUL HAD PROBLEMS WITH PREACHING...

- 1) Because of his past reputation.... (believers didn't trust him)

AND...

- 2) Because of the message he delivered...

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- The enemies of Jesus wanted to kill him.

EVEN THOUGH...

- Saul was a totally new guy because of Jesus!

NONETHELESS...

**IDEA #3 – MORE PREPARATION WAS NEEDED:** (vv.30-31)

AS OUR STUDY CLOSES...

- Saul escapes death once again and was sent back to Tarsus.
  - He was there another 7-years.

BY WAY OF APPLICATION...

- Maybe you feel like your ministry is a mess!

BE ENCOURAGED...

- Because God is preparing you... for what's ahead.
  - So stay faithful... learn your lessons...
    - And be ready when He calls you!

AMEN!