

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

An Exposition

by

Arno C. Gaebelein

Copyright © 1912

edited for 3BSB by Baptist Bible Believer in the spirit of the Colportage Ministry of a century ago

~ out-of-print and in the public domain ~

CHAPTER NINE

The previous chapter may be looked upon in its main part as a parenthesis.

The record now leads us back to the close of the seventh chapter and the person who was connected with the great tragedy enacted there is prominently brought before us. The witnesses of the wicked deed had laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. This is the first time this remarkable man is mentioned. We also learned that he was consenting unto Stephen's death; he made havoc of the church and committed men and women to prison.

While the scattered believers had carried the Gospel throughout Judea, Philip had gone down to Samaria and with great results preached the Gospel, and during the same time Peter and John preached in the Samaritan villages, Saul carried on his work of persecution.

This we learn from the opening verse of the present chapter:

“And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest.”

The conversion of this great persecutor and his call by the risen and glorified Lord to be the Apostle to the Gentiles is the event which is next described. It is the greatest event recorded in Acts next to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.

Before we expound the most important account of Saul's conversion and point out its extremely interesting lessons, it may be in order to give a brief description of the young man, who takes the leading part in the remaining portion of the Book of Acts.

Saul was born in Tarsus, an old city, and the capital of Cilicia.

In that city was situated a great university given mostly to the study of Philosophy. Josephus in agreement with Jewish literature identified the city with Tarshish, to which Jonah attempted to flee.

Saul has often been called a “Hellenist,” that is, a Grecian Jew. But this is easily answered by his own words, **“a Hebrew of the Hebrews.”** He belonged to the sect of the Pharisees, and his father was likewise a member of the same class, for Saul called himself **“a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee”** (Acts 23:6).

His bringing up was on the strictest Jewish order. All the observances of the law and the traditions of the elders were conscientiously followed by him. This fact he calls to mind when he wrote his great defense of the Gospel to the Galatians:

“For ye have heard,” he states, **“of my conversation in time past in the Jew’s religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the Church of God, and wasted it. And profited in the Jew’s religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers”** (Galatians 1:13, 14).

He also witnesses of his life before the Grace and Power of God converted him, when he wrote to the Philippians:

“Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness, which is in the law, blameless” (Philippians 3:5, 6).

This young Pharisee had a strong belief in the God of Israel, in His promises and the destiny of Israel. This belief manifested itself outwardly in a zeal for God. *

* The same zeal possessed him of which he speaks as possessing his brethren according to the flesh.

“Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God” (Romans 10:1-3).

While he was thus filled with pride of race, zeal for God, but without knowledge, striving to attain righteousness, to fulfill and obey the very letter of the law, he had an intense hatred of what he supposed to be disloyalty to the law.

In Tarsus, his native city, he became fully acquainted with Greek customs, Greek life, literature, art and philosophy. The local industry of Tarsus was tent making. These tents were manufactured out of goat’s hair. This trade the young Saul learned. Teaching boys a certain trade is an ancient Jewish custom. His family may have been very influential and wealthy. He had a married sister living in Jerusalem, who must have been very highly connected (Acts 23:16).

Saul of Tarsus was furthermore a Roman citizen. This was a high honor and privilege. It could be bought for large sums of money.

When Paul was about to be scourged he mentioned his Roman citizenship. The chief captain, a Greek by the name of Claudius Lysias (Acts 23:26), said: **“With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born”** (Acts 22:28).

The prisoner held a higher honor than the captain; no wonder Claudius Lysias was afraid. His family must have had the Roman citizenship conferred upon them as a mark of distinction or reward for some eminent service.

Saul received his religious education in Jerusalem. We listen again to his own words:

“I am verily a man, which am Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city (Jerusalem) at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye are all this day” (Acts 22:3) .

Gamaliel was the greatest rabbi of the Pharisees, the president of the Sanhedrim. He was the son of Simon and grandson of the celebrated Hillel. We have found his name before in the fifth chapter. He was highly esteemed for his learning.

The Talmud says, “When he died the honor of the Torah (law) ceased, and purity and piety became extinct.”

At the feet of this great and learned man, Saul of Tarsus sat. That Saul was highly respected in Jerusalem and close to the leaders of the people, is seen by the letters entrusted to him and the commission to Damascus. He may have been even a member of the council, for **“he voted.”** **“When they (Christians) were put to death, I gave my voice (lit., my vote) against them”** (Acts 26:10).

It may be interesting to say a word on his outward appearance. He has frequently been pictured as a tall, handsome-looking man. But in II Corinthians 10:10 we read otherwise. The Corinthians were used to the athletic figures of the Greeks. Of Paul they said, **“His letters are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak and his speech contemptible.”**

A very old apocryphal book, dating back to the end of the first century, *“Acta Pauli et Theclae,”* has an interesting description of his person, which may be genuine. “A man of moderate stature, with crisp hair, crooked legs, blue eyes, large knit brows, and long nose, at times looking like a man, at times like an angel.”

And now we turn to the chapter before us. It is divided into five parts.

I. The Vision of Glory on the road to Damascus (Verses 1-9).

II. The Call to Ananias (Verses 10-16).

III. Saul filled with the Spirit, Baptized and Preaching Jesus, that He is the Son of God (Verses 17-22).

IV. Saul Persecuted and back in Jerusalem (Verses 23-30).

V Further Acts of Peter (Verses 31-43).

I. The Vision of Glory on the road to Damascus.

“And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink” (Verses 1-9).

We behold then, this young Pharisee in the zenith of his hatred against the disciples of the Lord. He breathed out threatenings and slaughter.

His aim was much like Haman the Agagite, who wanted all Jews exterminated; so Saul was bent on the extermination of the believers in the Lord.

The fact that he came to the high priest for letters to go to Damascus would show that he considered his work of persecution and scattering in Jerusalem about completed.

There were several large synagogues in Damascus. As this city was in constant communication with Jerusalem, the Jews in Damascus must have heard much of the new and startling events which so recently had come to pass in Jerusalem.

The day of Pentecost, in all probability, brought many Damascene Jews to Jerusalem, and perhaps some of them heard the message from Peter’s lips. The good news was carried quickly in a short time; believers appeared in Rome at an early date, among them two, Andronicus and Junia, who were in Christ before Paul’s conversion (Romans 16:7).

Damascus had most likely a good number of Jews who believed in Jesus as the Christ. They had, however, not separated from the synagogue. The leader of them must have been Ananias, and of him Paul says later **“a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there”** (chapter 22:12).

The news of Saul’s commission to arrest believers in the Lord Jesus Christ had also preceded him, for Ananias in his simplicity told the Lord, **“he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on Thy Name”** (9:14).

No doubt they must have earnestly prayed for deliverance from this great persecutor. He received his letters and went on his journey with a heart filled with burning hatred.

And now God's marvelous Grace and Power in salvation is to be manifested.

Israel as a nation had rejected the offer and Stephen's death marked the end of that gracious offer. But God can manifest even greater riches of His Grace and display His great Love. Saul not alone belonged to the nation, which had rejected Christ, but shared in that rejection, but he was, so to speak, the heading up of all the hatred and malignity against the Christ of God.

He personified the blindness, unbelief and hatred of the whole nation. He was indeed an enemy, the greatest enemy, the chief of sinners. Surely only Grace could save such a one, and Grace it is, which is now to be manifested in the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, the Grace, which he was to know first by the vision of the glorified Christ, and which he, ever after, was to proclaim and make known to others. And therefore he could say:

"Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long suffering, for a pattern to them, which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting" (I Timothy 1:16).

And we may also look upon the wonderful event which took place on the road to Damascus as a direct answer to Stephen's dying prayer and the first fruits of the blood of the first martyr. Stephen saw heaven opened; he beheld Jesus standing at the right hand of God; he saw the glory. We have mentioned before that Saul, the young Pharisee, stood by and beheld that uplifted face as it reflected the heavenly glory. He heard the words of Stephen testifying of this great vision and perhaps, as Stephen knelt down under the shower of stones, which fell upon him, he saw the dark face of the young Pharisee Saul, and then for him and all who shared in the vile deed, he prayed that Christ-like prayer, **"Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."**

And now the heavens are opened once more. He, the chief of sinners, the religious Jew, who hated the name of Jesus and all who believed on Him, is now to gaze into the opened heavens and see not alone Glory and the Person of Him whom he persecuted, but also to hear His voice. What infinite Grace! Stephen, the Saint of God, beheld an opened heaven and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the next who sees heaven opened and beholds the Lord and hears His voice is the chief of sinners.

What happened on the road to Damascus was unique.

Saul's conversion is unlike any other conversion. Nor has such an event taken place since then. That it will be repeated on a larger scale in a future day is assured by the Word of Prophecy. The heavens will be opened once more. Out of the opened heavens there will again shine forth the Glory of the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords. In His Glory, He will appear the second time. And when He comes in the clouds of heaven there will be still His blinded people on earth, a remnant of them, and like Saul they will behold the glorious vision.

Then will be fulfilled what is written in Zechariah 12:10:

"They shall look upon me whom they have pierced and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for His only Son."

Saul must have seen the nail prints and the pierced side, as Thomas saw them, when the Lord appeared the second time. Of that second coming it is written, “**Behold He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him and they also which pierced Him**” (Revelation 1:7).

This is future. Those who pierced Him, His own, will see Him in that day and that will mean a wonderful salvation for the whole nation, for all Israel living in that day. In John 19 We read in a number of passages that things were fulfilled when our Lord was crucified, but when it comes to the Scripture, “**they shall look on Him whom they pierced,**” the Holy Spirit avoids the word fulfilled and substitutes for it “**another Scripture saith**” (John 19:37).

The conversion of Saul is therefore a great type of the national conversion of the people Israel.

The vision itself which burst upon Saul on the road to Damascus is one of the greatest in the whole Bible. It has baffled unbelief. Infidels of all descriptions, French rationalists like Renan, reformed rationalistic Jews, and the worst of all, the advocates of the destructive Bible Criticism, have tried to explain the occurrence in some natural way.

Renan in his *Les Apotres* (the Apostles) says that it was an uneasy conscience with unstrung nerves, fatigue of the journey, eyes inflamed by the hot sun, a sudden stroke of fever, which produced the hallucination. And this nonsense is repeated to this day.

Others of the critics have stated that it was a thunderstorm which overtook him, and that a flash of lightning blinded him. In that lightning flash he imagined that he saw Christ. This is preached by some of these critics, who occupy pulpits.

Again, others have tried to explain his vision by some physical disease. Jews and others have declared that he suffered from Epilepsy, which the Greeks called “the holy disease.” This disease, they say, put him into a state of ecstasy, which may have greatly impressed his Gentile hearers. In such an attack he imagined to have seen a vision and heard a voice. All these and other opinions are puerile inventions emanating from the Father of lies. The fact is, the conversion of Saul is one of the great miracles and evidences of Christianity.

After we have learned the importance and significance of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, as well as the typical and prophetic aspect of the event, we shall now examine the event in its details.

The ninth chapter does not contain the full record of what happened on the road to Damascus.

The Apostle Paul himself relates twice his own experience in chapter 22:5-16 and in chapter 26:12-18. He also mentions his conversion briefly in I Corinthians 15:8, Galatians 1:15-16 and I Timothy 1:12-13.

The three accounts of Saul’s conversion are not without meaning.

The one before us in the ninth chapter is the briefest and is simply the historical account of the event as it had to be embodied in the Book of the Acts, as history.

The account in the twenty-second chapter was given by Paul in the Hebrew tongue; it is the longest statement and was addressed to the Jews. The account in the twenty-sixth chapter was given in presence of the Roman governor Festus and the Jewish king Agrippa, therefore addressed to both Jews and Gentiles. But are there not discrepancies and disagreements in these three accounts? Such has been the claim from the side of men who reject the inspiration of the Bible. There are differences, but no disagreements. These differences in themselves are the evidences of inspiration. The differences, however, are simply in the manner in which the facts of the event are presented. We shall point out all this when we come to these accounts.

It was near Damascus, when suddenly there shone round about the great persecutor of the church of God a light out of heaven. Nothing is said in this record here of the time of the day when this happened.

In the third account in this book, the Apostle mentions the part of the day when it took place:

“At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me” (Acts 26:13).

It was in the time of the day when the sun shone brightest. Its glaring rays fell upon the road upon which Saul and his companions were journeying on. Saul was pushing onward in his madness, eager to reach the city in which further demonstrations of his hatred were to be given, when suddenly a far brighter light than the light of the mid-day sun shone round about him and his companions. The light fell out of heaven and was the Glory of the Lord of Glory.

On the field of Bethlehem the Glory of the Lord shone round about the shepherds, but here it is the shining forth of the Glory of Him who had died and had risen from the dead, the Glory of Him, who entered into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. And Saul under that Glory-light, fell to the earth; it was too much for a human being to stand. He laid prostrate on the ground. Those who were with him likewise fell down, for Paul in his account says that they all fell to the earth (Chapter 26:14).

This is one of the alleged discrepancies.

While in his account Paul declares that the whole company fell down, the record here states that the men, who journeyed with him stood speechless (Verse 7).

In our present chapter the companions of Paul are seen standing while Paul tells us later they fell down. This is claimed to be a disagreement. Even some careful expositors like Dean Alford have found a difficulty here. But why should there be any difficulty at all?

Paul's narratives of what happened to him contain the complete account. He tells us that they were all fallen to the ground when this glory-light shone out of heaven. This fact is omitted in the historical account here. We see those who journeyed with Saul standing speechless, after the Lord had spoken to him. It does not say that they stood when the light shone upon them. That would have been impossible.

If the band, which had gone after the Lord in the garden to take Him captive, fell backward when the Man of humiliation had uttered His majestic **“I am”** (John 18:6), how much more must these have fallen to the ground, when the heavenly Glory burst upon them. The text here tells us that the companions of Paul were so amazed at what had happened that they had lost temporarily the power of speech. They had fallen to the ground but now had arisen and stood speechless.

But Saul had heard a voice out of that bright light. The voice spoke in the Hebrew tongue. This we learn from Paul’s address before Festus and Agrippa. The voice calls him by name. He is fully known to Him who speaks out of heaven.

All along in all his work of evil, his persecutions and the hatred he exhibited against those who believed on Christ, that eye had seen him and followed him. He had kept silent. He did not interfere in the wicked work Saul had done; but now He kept silence no longer. But more than that, Saul beheld the Lord Himself.

In that great light which shone about him, in that opened heaven, he saw Him, who had spoken, the Man in Glory. The Lord Jesus Christ appeared unto him. The Son of God in the Glory of the Father was revealed unto Saul. Though the record here is silent about the actual vision, it is clearly seen from other Scriptures that such was the case.

Ananias later addressed Saul and said, **“Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way”** (9:17). From another verse in our chapter (verse 27), we learn that Barnabas said **“that he had seen the Lord in the way and that He had spoken to him.”** Then in Chapter 26:16, the Lord Himself spoke to Saul: **“I have appeared unto thee.”**

A more direct testimony is found from the Apostle in I Corinthians 15, where, after mentioning the different witnesses of the resurrection, Paul says:

“And last of all He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God” (I Corinthians 15:8-9).

He saw the Lord in all His resurrection Glory and this, besides the direct call, constituted him an Apostle, for he was now a fit witness to the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

“Am I not an Apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?” (I Corinthians 9:1).

Did he know the Lord in person when he walked on the earth? Saul was in Jerusalem at that time; he must have seen Him there. II Corinthians 5:16 seems to indicate this.

And now that voice, which had spoken with so much tenderness on earth, the voice he had refused to hear, spoke to him from glory:

“Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou ME? And he said, Who art Thou Lord? And the Lord said. I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.”

And what a meeting it was which thus took place on the road to Damascus! The Lord who had died for that nation (John 11:51), and he who was the culmination of all the hatred of the nation, who hated Him without a cause, were now face to face.

- His eyes gazed upon that figure in Glory,
- His ears heard the words which fell from His lips.
- The words which came out of heaven were not the words of a stern Judge.
- It was the voice of a gracious, loving Saviour and Lord, the same who had once called in the garden to fallen man, **“Where art thou?”**

Saul, the persecutor of the church of God, had deserved wrath. Instead of judgment and wrath, Grace, infinite and unfathomable Grace, meets him. That Grace, which he was the chosen instrument to proclaim from henceforth in all its unlimited riches, he must taste first of all. That Grace which flows from the risen and glorified Saviour is first of all manifested in his own case.

The possibilities of Grace, the riches of Grace, are indeed fully demonstrated in the great event on the Damascus road. Triumphantly he declared afterwards:

“This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long suffering, for a pattern to them that should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting” (I Timothy 1:15, 16).

“Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?”

The voice had spoken out of heaven. How could he answer that question? It was unanswerable. From the trembling lips of the young Pharisee there comes the question, **“Who art Thou, Lord?”**

The person he beholds, shining out of heaven surrounded by the glory-light, which of old dwelt in the midst of Israel, can be none other but the Lord. And so the prostrate Saul addresses Him as Lord. And the Lord answers him in His loving Grace, **“I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.”**

The full and awful truth now flashes upon the trembling questioner.

The Jesus, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil (Acts 10:38), who was crucified, who was rejected by the nation, the Jesus, whom dying Stephen beheld, into whose hands he had committed his spirit, that Jesus, whom he hated and whose followers he had so cruelly persecuted, is the Lord. The Man, who hung on a cross reckoned among the evil-doers, who died that shameful death, lives and is the Man in Glory at the right hand of God. Marvellous revelation as it burst upon the collapsed persecutor in the simple answer, **“I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.”**

What was he then with all his boasting law-keeping? Who was he, the Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the law, a Pharisee and the son of a Pharisee?

Nothing less than an enemy of God and the chief of sinners.

In that Glory from above, in that voice, which spoke and declared Himself as Jesus the Lord, the blindness, wickedness and enmity of Israel and the flesh as well, were fully discovered. But if we were to enlarge, it would be necessary to cover all the blessed God-breathed teachings of the Gospel as contained in the Pauline Epistles.

The Gospel he preached, which he called “**my Gospel**,” this Gospel of Grace and Glory, the Holy Spirit so blessedly teaches in the great doctrinal Epistles penned through the Apostle Paul, is contained in a nutshell in the event on the road to Damascus.

To the Galatians Paul wrote later in his wonderful defense of that Gospel:

“But I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel, which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ” (Galatians 1:11, 12).

That Gospel, which he received was first revealed in that Glory-flash out of heaven; it is the Gospel of the Glory of the blessed God. Man has no part nor share in it, but it is all of God, all of Grace.

But in the first chapter of Colossians Paul tells us that he is not only the minister of the Gospel but that another ministry was given to him, the ministry of the church, which is His body.

The two, the Gospel of Grace and the truth concerning the church, the mystery hidden in former ages go together and are inseparably connected. God tells out in the two the completeness and riches of His grace in Christ Jesus.

In the Epistle to the Ephesians, well termed “*the rich Epistle*,” the Holy Spirit blends into a marvellous gem the two - Gospel and Church truth. And here the man in the dust of the highway, the chosen vessel, learns for the first time the great revelation he was to make known.

Listen to him as he writes from the Roman prison:

“For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward, how that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery . . . which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men” (Ephesians 3:1-5).

That mystery is the church as the body of Christ.

Every believing sinner is a member of the body of Christ. Christ in Glory, the Lord, who spoke to Saul in the way, is the Head of that body, the church. Christ is in each member of His body, His life is there; and every believer is in Christ. **“Ye in Me and I in you.”**

And this great hidden mystery too flashes forth in this wonderful event, for the first time.

“Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me . . . I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.”

The poor, hated, despised Nazarenes, whom the mad, Jewish zealot Saul of Tarsus had driven out of Jerusalem: put into prison and delivered unto death, were one with the Lord in Glory. They were identified with Him and He with them. Their persecution meant His persecution, in their affliction He was afflicted. They were members of His body and that body was in existence.

The Lord commanded Saul to arise and go into the city where his question **“What wilt Thou have me to do?”** would be answered. The men then had also arisen and had lost the power of speech **“hearing a voice, but seeing no man.”**

We remember years ago how a poor, blinded Jew attended our Gospel meetings and among his claims that the New Testament contradicted itself, he would cite the statement here about the companions of Saul and Paul’s statement that **“they heard not the voice of Him that spoke with me”** (Acts 22:9). He called this a disagreement. The far more blinded Higher Critics make the same assertion. But there is no disagreement.

Luke in his brief account tells us that the men heard a voice. But Paul tells us that they heard not **“the voice of Him that spake with me.”**

They did not hear the conversation, they heard the sound of a voice but the voice itself was unintelligible to them. John 12:28-29 explains it perfectly. The Son of God heard the Father’s voice. The people who stood by heard the sound waves and some declared that it was thunder, others that an angel had spoken. Only the Son heard what the Father had said. So here. The men heard the sound of the voice, but what was said they did not hear; Saul alone understood the words of the heavenly speaker.

Then Saul arose. He is obedient at once. It is the first act of obedience he yields to Him whose bond servant he had become through His wonderful grace. But when his eyes were opened, he saw no man. The vision of the Lord and His Glory had blinded his eyes and his companions had to take him by the hand and lead him.

What a change had taken place!

The self-sufficient, boasting Pharisee, who had pressed on towards Damascus, had become as helpless as a child. He who led others was now obliged to be led. We wonder what became of the letters he carried from the high priest. Perhaps he flung them at once from his person.

The blindness which had come upon him has also its spiritual significance. It indicates the result of the vision of Glory in his own life. He was blind to the things down here.

It is said of an astronomer who had looked too long into the light of the sun that he became blind. However, it was not darkness, which enshrouded him; but the brilliant orb of the sun in the heavens ever dazzled before his eyes. Wherever he looked he saw the sun. If he awoke in the darkest night the fiery ball of the sun was the object before his eyes. And Paul after his glory experience had but one object, Christ in Glory and the Glory of Christ.

He truly like the disciples on the mount of transfiguration “**saw no man save Jesus only**” (Matthew 17:8). The Gospel of Grace and Glory of the Son of God must blind our eyes to the things which are seen.

Three days Saul was without sight, nor did he eat and drink. He was passing through a grave like Jonah. What must have been his feeling and his experience during these three days? Shut up in darkness; what soul exercise must have been his portion! But He was secure in the hands of Him, of whom He was soon to testify, “**He loved Me and gave Himself for Me.**”

II. The call to Ananias.

“And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, and hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight. Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: for I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name’s sake” (Verses 10-16).

And now the Lord, who had in such grace met Saul on the road to Damascus, goes before him to the city.

An humble disciple lived there; he was a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews, who lived in that city (Acts 22:12). This devout follower of the Lord Jesus Christ had a vision which concerned Saul.

One has well said, “The Lord Jesus as master of the house must, so to speak, complete arrangements for adding Saul to His household.”

What a great change had been wrought! Perhaps someday, in the presence of the Lord, when all hidden things will be made manifest, we may find that Saul’s hatred was aimed especially against Ananias, who must have been the leader of the assembly in Damascus. Saul had set out to bind Ananias and all that call on the name of the Lord, and put them into prison. But Ananias hears now that he is to go to Saul instead and seek him, who had come to seek and persecute them. It was the Lord who spoke to Ananias in the vision.

The childlike and calm answer this disciple gave to the Lord is an evidence of the simplicity and reality of his prayer life.

The Lord gave him the directions where to find him. He was to inquire in the house of Judas in the street, which is called Straight. But the Lord furthermore told Ananias that Saul likewise had a vision. “**Behold he prayeth**” was the cheering message the Lord gave of him. It was the manifestation of the new life in Saul.

In answer to the prayer of Saul - prayer, no doubt for light and deliverance - the Lord had given him the vision. He saw Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, that he might receive sight.

“A pair of visions, which mutually correspond, as the visions of Ananias and Saul in this instance, removes all suspicion of treacherous phantasy.” *

* Bengel Gnomen of N. T.

That Ananias was chosen for this mission is very significant.

The Samaritans, as we learned in Chapter 7, had to wait till Peter and John came from Jerusalem, before the Holy Spirit came upon them. One would expect that the Apostles were equally needed in the case of Saul of Tarsus.

Peter, John nor any of the other Apostles, however, are mentioned in connection with Saul's conversion, baptism and the gift of the Holy Spirit. In their place an humble, unknown disciple is called by the Lord to act. And yet Saul was called an Apostle and chosen to be the greatest of the Apostles.

Ritualistic Christendom, with its claims of apostolic succession and authority, finds this hard to explain. Paul's apostleship “**was not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead**” (Galatians 1:1).

Jerusalem and the Apostles there had nothing whatever to do with his case. One who was not an Apostle at all, whose name is not mentioned again in the Bible, was the chosen instrument to lay his hands on Saul of Tarsus. Here then we have the first indication of what the apostleship of Paul was to be. It was three years after all this had transpired that he went up to Jerusalem to see Peter; and then it was not for any confirmation of his apostleship.

Ananias answered the Lord. The evil reputation of Saul had preceded him to Damascus. Perhaps some of the suffering believers, who had been forced to leave Jerusalem, found a refuge in Damascus. And Ananias in a simple and natural way tells the Lord all about it.

The task laid upon him seems too great and he acquaints the Lord with what he had heard about this man.

This, has been declared, was a foolish thing. Of course, the Lord knew all about Saul; he knew far better the evil work he had accomplished than Ananias could ever know. Further-more the Lord had told Ananias that Saul was praying; why then should he protest against the call and speak thus to one who is omniscient?

While unbelief had its share in it and the weakness of the flesh is seen, it is likewise something which brings cheer to our hearts. The Lord in His graciousness does not rebuke Ananias for his unbelieving reply. He bears with the weakness of His servant and condescends to make known unto him the future destiny of the praying Saul.

And we, too, fail so much in our prayers, doubting and fearing, when we are addressing Him, who is the omnipotent and omniscient Lord, so reluctant to follow unquestioning His gracious directions. Have we not found Him as loving and condescending as Ananias did?

And the Lord takes His servant into His own confidence; He tells him about Saul and what is in store for him. He is a chosen vessel and the Name, which is above every other name, is to be made known by him to Gentiles, Kings and the children of Israel.

It is significant that the children of Israel are mentioned last, while the Gentiles are in the foreground. While Paul the Apostle preached to the Jews and went into their synagogues, his mission was to the Gentiles as the Apostle of the Gentiles. His sufferings for His Name's sake are likewise announced by the Lord. And here we must not forget that the same Lord, who knew all about Saul and his life as it was to be, is our Lord, too, and knows us, plans for us, as He knew him and did with him, who delighted to call himself, **"the chief of sinners."** What comfort we should take from this fact!

III. Saul filled with the Spirit, baptized and preaching Jesus, that He is the Son of God.

"And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized. And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. And straightway he preached Jesus in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests? But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ" (Verses 17-22).

The Lord had said to Ananias **"go thy way."** Ananias went his way. He followed the Lord obediently. Directed by Him, he soon found the stricken Saul in the place, which the vision had revealed to him.

The two, Saul of Tarsus and Ananias are now face to face. Saul does not see his visitor, for he is still blind, but he was patiently waiting for him to come, for the Lord had told him all about his coming and even revealed his name.

And Ananias saw before himself the former persecutor of the Church of God (Galatians 1:13) in a helpless condition. They do not need to be introduced to each other. The Lord had done this. Ananias addresses Saul and the way he does it is extremely precious.

"Brother Saul," he said as he put his hands on him, **"the Lord Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit."**

He addressed him as brother. The work had been accomplished and the young Pharisee, who had seen the Lord was indeed now “**a brother beloved.**”

The Grace of God is strikingly illustrated in this. There was no confession to Ananias, no rebuke nor accusation, nothing from the side of Saul of Tarsus; Grace had saved him and made of him a brother in the Lord. And now his blindness is removed under the laying on of hands; he received his sight.

When we reach Chapter 22, Paul’s account of this scene, we shall find additional information of what transpired then. Here the record is brief. The laying on of the hands of this disciple* of the Lord most likely was the moment when not only Saul’s eyes were opened, but when he was also filled with the Holy Spirit.

* The learned Dr. Lightfoot in his *Horae Hebraicae* puts the following questions without answering them. “Could Ananias therefore confer the Holy Spirit? This seemed the peculiar prerogative of the Apostles; could therefore a private disciple do this to an Apostle? By the imposition of his hands could he impart the gift of tongues and prophecy?”

Ananias had delivered the message to him that he should be filled with the Holy Spirit and though it is not directly stated here that this filling took place at once in connection with the opening of his eyes, it is perfectly right to assume that such was the case.

We discover a variety of modes of the filling with the Spirit.

On Pentecost no hands were laid on anyone, but the statement there made was, Repent, be baptized and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The Samaritans had been baptized, but for a special reason (stated in our exposition) they had to wait till Peter and John came from Jerusalem and laid their hands upon them.

Cornelius and his household were not baptized, nor had hands been laid upon them, when the Holy Spirit fell upon them.

The disciples at Ephesus (Acts 19) were baptized and only after Paul laid his hands upon them came the Holy Spirit upon them.

Paul must have received the Spirit first, then he arose and was baptized.

Why these different modes? If there had been uniformity in every case it would have resulted in the belief that in order to receive the Holy Spirit, the same uniform method must be followed. This was to be avoided. It must be remembered that all these cases in Acts were unique, falling into the transition stage.

The Epistles, however, teach that the Holy Spirit is received by all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; “**in whom also believing ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise**” (Ephesians 1:13) is the order now.

Saul after this was certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus.

Who can describe the happy times in the Lord they must have had! What hymns of praise they must have sung to the Lord for the riches of His Grace, so wonderfully manifested in the salvation of Saul! **“And straightway he preached Jesus in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.”**

The word **“straightway”** teaches us something. It is the word which occurs some thirty-five times in the Gospel of Mark, the Gospel record, which shows Christ as the perfect servant. The word **“straightway”** manifests the Lord’s prompt and untiring service, which He rendered to His Father. And Saul begins His witness for the Lord with a **“straightway.”**

Of all the Apostles he was the most prompt in his service, laboring more than all the others. The glorious vision on the Damascus road, the sight of the Man in Glory and his oneness with Him, as made known to him by revelation, produced this marvellous service in the life of the converted persecutor of the Church. We, too, if we have the Lord ever before our hearts may have our **“straightway”** service.

And what a sensation was produced as he went from synagogue to synagogue and delivered his message!

Perhaps as he entered the synagogues his brethren welcomed him most heartily. Had he not done, according to their view, such a good work in Jerusalem? They hated that Name, too, and were glad that Saul had come to bind the believers in Christ and bring them to Jerusalem to be dealt with by the chief priests of the nation. But how great must have been their consternation when the celebrated Pharisee and persecutor opened his lips and preached the very name they despised and hated.

As he continued in this work in the synagogues his strength increased.

The testimony he gave established him and was a blessing to his own soul. The Jews dwelling in Damascus, and their numbers were very large, were confounded. His preaching was exclusively concerning the Lord Jesus, who had been crucified; and he proved that this is the very Christ.

The question of the Messiah promised to Israel was then agitating the hearts and minds of all Jews, as it does still among those Jews, who still believe in the Law and the Prophets. And what a preacher Saul must have been! He had a remarkable knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures.

The Holy Spirit filling him illuminated the many Messianic prophecies and in the power of the Spirit these were applied as being fulfilled in Him, whose name they had refused to accept. He began his great witness bearing in the Synagogues in Damascus.

Later we read of the method he used, so effectually.

“He reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, opening and alleging, that Christ must needs

have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ” * (Acts 17:2-3).

* This is still the right way in arguing with the Jews. First, showing from the Scriptures the predictions concerning Christ. Secondly, showing their fulfilment in the person of our Lord.

And to this arguing from Scripture came the powerful argument of his own experience. He had seen the Lord. The one who hung on the cross, whose tomb was found empty on the third day, who had been seen by His disciples after His passion, whom they declared to be risen from the dead, who had left the earth and ascended into heaven, whose resurrection had been fully proven by the Coming of the Holy Spirit and by many signs and miracles, Saul had seen and heard His voice. Therefore he preached Jesus that He is the Son of God.

Up to this time this name of the risen Lord had not been preached.

It would have been very natural for Peter to refer to his former confession of Christ at Caesarea Philippi, where he said, **“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God;”** but it was not for Peter to preach Jesus thus. Saul had seen the rejected One in Glory and this demonstrates Him the Son of God by resurrection from the dead, the great and blessed foundation truth of the Gospel.

IV. Saul persecuted and back in Jerusalem.

“And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him: But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket. And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem. And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him. Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus. Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied” (Verses 23-30).

The Holy Spirit has not given us a record of the **“many days”** mentioned in the 23rd verse. During these many days he made a journey to Arabia. The first chapter in Galatians tells us of this fact. **“Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were Apostles before me, but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus”** (Galatians 1:17). This is the only time his journey into Arabia is mentioned in the Bible. How long he spent there and what he did there is unrevealed. It is incorrect to say he spent three years in Arabia; in Galatians the statement is made that three years after his return to Damascus he went to Jerusalem. This does not mean that he was for three years in Arabia.

Most likely as other great men of God went to the desert, Saul likewise sought Arabia for

quietness, meditation and prayer. His reappearing in Damascus was the signal for an outbreak against him. He had confounded the Jews before he went into Arabia, and now with still greater power he was ready to continue his God-given message.

The Jews then took counsel to kill him. It is the first act of persecution and suffering recorded in this wonderful life of suffering for Christ's sake. He is starting with when the Lord had said, **“for I will show him how great things he must suffer for my Name's sake”** (verse 16). But the plot was discovered by Saul. He knew himself in the hands of the Lord.

That glorious Lord, whom He had seen, was His shield and He guarded His servant, as He still keeps His servants by His power.

The plot was the work of Satan, who had become aroused on account of the great victory the Lord had achieved in translating the persecutor from the power of darkness into His own kingdom (Colossians 1). He could not wrest him from Christ, so he would silence his testimony here; but this Satan could not do.

The Jews had the gates watched; but by night he was let down by the wall in a basket. Paul refers to this later:

“In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me. And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands” (II Corinthians 11:32-33).

According to his statement in the chapter which relates his sufferings, this experience of having to leave Damascus as a fugitive was a very humiliating one. What a contrast with the anticipated entrance into Damascus, when he had left Jerusalem to persecute the church and his flight from Damascus to go to Jerusalem!

This first visit to Jerusalem took place three years after his conversion. Why did he not return at once? Flesh and blood indeed must have suggested this to him. He was a courageous man. Nothing would have pleased him better than to return at once to the city he loved so well and preach the Name he once despised. But he did not confer with flesh and blood, nor did he go up to Jerusalem to them which were Apostles before him (Galatians 1:16-17). It had to be so to prove that he had his apostleship apart from Jerusalem.

This is the reason why this historical account is embodied in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians.

In his defence of the Gospel contained in that Epistle he shows first that he is an Apostle and how he became an Apostle. The twelve in Jerusalem had nothing to do with it. But when he arrived there he was treated with suspicion. Evidently the testimony he had given so faithfully in Damascus was not fully known in the church in Jerusalem. Could it be possible that this young Pharisee, who but three years ago had scattered the believers in the city, put them into prison and had them maltreated in every way and killed, was now truly a believer?

This distrust surely was a sign of weakness in the disciples.

Instead of believing the Grace of God, which had wrought so mightily in Saul, and rejoicing that he which persecuted them in times past, now preached the faith he once destroyed, they were afraid of him. This must have humbled him much. But He who had become the recipient of such Grace and delighted to call himself the chief of sinners, was gracious, and we hear no complaint from his side on account of the distrust of the disciples. We meet again Barnabas; it is the same of whom we read in the closing verses of chapter 4. Barnabas, whose name means “*son of consolation*,” was all this to Saul. He took him and introduced him to the Apostles, and told out the story of Grace more fully.

But we must again examine the historical record contained in the Apostle’s own words in Galatians 1. There we learn the details of this visit. He did not see all the Apostles, but only Peter and James, the Lord’s brother. The other Apostles he did not see. This detailed statement is made to show that no council of the Apostles was called before which (according to ecclesiastical rules in our day) Saul had to appear to receive the sanction of the Apostles upon his own Apostleship, a kind of ordination. He did not need this; the Lord had called and ordained him. He was an Apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ.

He abode with Peter, was Peter’s guest. He had come especially to get better acquainted with Peter. Perhaps he wanted Peter to tell him about the Lord, the blessed words he had heard from Him, the miracles He had done. The Gospel records were then not in existence. What a happy time they must have had together!

He abode with Peter fifteen days. His time in Jerusalem was well used. He spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus. He also disputed with the Hellenist Jews. He did the same work which Stephen was occupied with when he was ushered before the council. For all we know it was the same synagogue which he sought out, the man who hailed from Tarsus in Cilicia.

And if, as we showed in our exposition of the sixth chapter, Saul was one of those who disputed with Stephen, what a sensation it must have made in the synagogue, when this same Saul arose to perpetuate the mighty work Stephen had left to enter into the Lord’s Own presence! But Stephen’s fate threatened Saul. **“They went about to slay him.”** The brethren knew of it and brought him to Caesarea and sent him forth to Tarsus, his own native city. The reason why Saul readily consented to this is learned from chapter 22:17-21.

“And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee: And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him. And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.”

He received then in that trance-message his commission.

Not Jerusalem and Judea was to be the scene of his activity, but the territory outside of the land;

not the Jews' Apostle he was to be, but the Apostle to the Gentiles. "Depart, for I will send thee far hence to the Gentiles." When later Paul in self-will stepped upon the territory the Lord had told him to leave, he got into great difficulty and became a prisoner. As a result of Saul's conversion, the 31st verse says, "the churches had rest." The word "churches," however, must be changed into "church." The translation of church in the plural is founded upon later manuscripts. There were many local churches or assemblies in Judea, but it was but one church, as there is but one church to-day. The church then had rest. The believers walked in the fear of the Lord and comfort of the Holy Spirit. Increase marked this happy condition.

V. Further Acts of Peter.

"And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all quarters, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda. And there he found a certain man named Aeneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy. And Peter said unto him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately. And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord.

Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and alms deeds which she did. And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid her in an upper chamber. And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring him that he would not delay to come to them. Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them. But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up. And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her alive. And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord. And it came to pass, that he tarried many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner" (Verses 32-43).

The ninth chapter closes with further acts of the Apostle Peter. It seems Peter made a kind of visitation, going from place to place. Two miracles happened in this connection. The healing of Aeneas and the raising up of Tabitha, who had died. The significant fact in connection with one of these miracles is that it was an answer to prayer. The one was healing and restoration, the other resurrection from the dead. Both miracles are of deep symbolical meaning. The Gospel was about to go forth to the Gentiles. Peter was to use again the keys of the kingdom of heaven in preaching to the household of Cornelius. Before this takes place the two miracles happened. They are significant in the place we find them, upon the threshold of the great event, the Gentiles to hear the Gospel. But why are they significant?

A commentator on these miracles says: "The record of these two miracles at this point makes us fancy that Luke saw in them a double sign of the great event to which they were the preface, viz., the gift of the Gentiles of repentance unto life (10:18). For they are complimentary:

1. The healing of Aeneas denotes the restoration of activity; and in the parallel sign of the Lord,

the healing of the palsied man at Capernaum, this is associated with the forgiveness of sins.

2. The raising of Dorcas denotes the gift of life; and it shows the need of it for the pious such as Dorcas, as for the innocent like Jairus' daughter, whom the Lord raised. In Aeneas then we may see symbolized the healing of those Gentiles who are sick with sin; in Dorcas the giving of life to those Gentiles who, though full of good works, **"are aliens from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them"** (Ephesians 4:18).

However, the far better application of these two miracles is to Israel. Aeneas, which means *"praise,"* in his palsied condition like the impotent man in the five porches in John 5 and the lame man in Acts 3 at the beautiful gate, is a type of Israel, Aeneas' helpless condition is the condition of that people. And as the lame man at the beautiful gate arose in the name of Jesus Christ, so Aeneas is healed and so Israel will be healed some day. His own people, who are far from being a Praise in the earth, will someday be healed of their paralysis and become the miracle of the Lord's grace and mercy. And as with the case of Lydda and Saron, the inhabitants of these places who saw him, turned unto the Lord, so the Gentiles will receive their full blessing and turn unto the Lord, when Israel is healed. Without following the interesting account of Dorcas in its details, we desire to say she too represents Israel, and Dorcas' resurrection is a prophetic type of Israel's coming resurrection.

The good works of Tabitha, or as she was also called, Dorcas, her alms deeds and the blessing she was to others, remind us of Israel's calling to bless all nations. But she died and could no longer do the alms deeds. So Israel is dead spiritually and nationally. Peter came from Lydda to Joppa sent for by the disciples. He kneeled down and prayed, and when he turned to the body he addressed the corpse, **"Tabitha, arise."** She then opened her eyes and sat up. Peter gave her his hand and lifted her up and presented her alive in the presence of the saints and widows. Many believed on account of this miracle. Even so Israel will someday be raised from the dead and become the source of great blessing. As Peter prayed: so may we long and pray for the restoration of Israel. Some day Israel will rise and receive the life of which that nation is now destitute. **"Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem"** (Psalm 122:6). **"And give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth"** (Isaiah 62:7). How little of this prayer for Israel and Jerusalem is known among God's people! and all on account of the ignorance prevailing among Christians concerning the great destiny of the people who are still beloved for the Father's sake.

Peter tarried in Joppa in the house of Simon the tanner. Was he breaking with his Jewish law and customs? Tanning made necessary the handling of skins taken from unclean animals. It was, therefore, as a trade considered unclean by the Jews.

But for the great work Peter had to do in opening the door of the Kingdom to the Gentiles he had to be prepared in a special way.

~ end of chapter 9 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>