

LESSON X.

JESUS APPEARS TO PAUL

June 9, 1901

Acts 22: 6-16. Commit to memory vs. 6-8. Compare Acts 9: 1-20; 20: 9-20.

6 And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and I was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me.

7 And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

8 And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.

9 And they that were with me saw in fact the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.

10 And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.

11 And when I could not see for the glory of that

Revised Version—1 Drew; 2 Beheld; 3 Omitt and by me; 4 In that very hour; 5 On; 6 Appointed; 7 To from his mouth; 8 A witness for him; 9 His name.

light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus.

12 And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwell there,

13 Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him.

14 And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.

15 For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.

16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

Revised Version—1 Well reported of by; 2 That; 3 Standing chosen thee; 4 that thou shouldest know his will and; 5 see that Just One; 6 shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.

EXPLANATION

Connection—After the promise of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, many were converted and the Church grew and prospered. (2: 41, 47.) But persecutions came. (4: 1-3; 5: 17, 18; 6: 10-15). Stephen was put to death (7: 58), and the members of the Church were scattered. (8: 1.) But from the ranks of His enemies Christ raised up a defender of His cause. Saul, a member of the Council, had given his consent to Stephen's death (7: 58; 8: 1) and became an active persecutor. His remarkable conversion as told by himself is our lesson to-day.

6. It came to pass. This was twenty years later. He had been a zealous apostle. Fanatical Jews mobbed him in the Temple courts (21: 17-40), and while making his defence he tells them of his miraculous conversion. As I made my journey. Twenty years before, when, as Saul of Tarsus, he set out on the long journey of one hundred and forty miles to Damascus of Syria to punish the Christians (9: 1-3). The whole account there, vs. 1-22, should be carefully read. A great light; brighter than the mid-day glare of an Eastern sun (26: 13). It was the glory of Christ's presence. (1 Cor. 15: 8.)

7, 8. I fell unto the ground; from the beast on which he rode. Saul, Saul; Paul's Hebrew name. "Paul" is Greek. Why persecutest thou me? In persecuting Christ's followers he was persecuting Christ Himself. (Matt. 25: 45.) Who art thou, Lord? He asks the question in amazed bewilderment, recognizing that the voice is from the heavenly Lord, but not dreaming that it can be the despised Jesus of Nazareth. I am Jesus of Nazareth; revealing Himself to the bitter persecutor as the man of Nazareth and the Saviour. (Matt. 1: 21.) Can one imagine Saul's astonishment and consternation and shame?

9, 10. Saw the light. For a moment they stood speechless (9: 7), and then overpowered by the light they fell to the earth. (26: 14.) Were afraid; of the supernatural light. What shall I do, Lord? In the midst of his amazement, one thing was certain, it was his Master who had spoken. His flinty heart was changed into a heart of loving fear. Convinced

of the error of his ways, he asked for light and leading. Go into Damascus; not now to slay the Lord's servants, but to be taught what the Lord has for him to do. It shall be told thee. Jesus had provided an instructor. (9: 10-18.)

11, 12. When I could not see. The brightness of the light had afflicted him with temporary blindness, and the proud persecutor was led like a little child into the city. The glory of that light. The word for "glory" implies that the light was supernatural. Ananias. See as above ch. 9: 10-18. A devout man; a pious, God-fearing Jew, who had become a believer in Christ. (Acts 2: 5.) Having a good report; highly spoken of by his neighbors.

13. Came unto me; in the house of a disciple named Judas who lived in Straight street, Damascus. (9: 11.) Standing by me (Rev. Ver.); as Saul sat or reclined in his blindness, praying for light. (9: 11.) Brother Saul; a brother Jew and now a fellow believer. Receive thy sight. Ananias was speaking by divine authority. (9: 17.) In that very hour; on that very instant. I looked up upon him. With sight restored, he looked up and saw Ananias standing over him. (9: 17, 18.)

14. The God of our fathers. As much as to say: It is a new service, it is our fathers' God who still commands. Know his will; by special revelation. See that Just One; a suggestive title for Jesus whom Saul had despised and dishonored. To hear a voice from his mouth (Rev. Ver.); to receive personal instruction from Him. To have seen Christ was essential to being an apostle. (1 Cor. 9: 1.)

15, 16. His witness; to testify for Jesus on the ground of personal knowledge. Why tarriest thou? The truth must find expression in prompt action. Be baptized, etc. The putting away of sin by the Holy Spirit was symbolized by the act of baptism. Calling on the name of the Lord; thus acknowledging belief in His divine authority.

In Acts 9: 20, we are told that this new convert, who was by and by to become so notable an apostle, began immediately to preach Christ in the synagogues that He is the Son of God.