

God Sent Peter Before Paul

It is taught by 'mid-Acts-hyper-dispensationalists' that God started a 'new' church with **Paul** when he was converted in Acts chapter 9. First, we will examine those events and his commission from Jesus. Then we will see his journey and his sending out from the church. We will also look at the significance of **Peter** being the 1st to take salvation to a Gentile after the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

On his way to **Damascus**, to arrest the disciples of the Lord, and haul them to jail in **Jerusalem** **Saul** was saved:

Acts 9:1-2 And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,
2 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**.

We get more information from Paul's recounting of Acts 9 to king Agrippa:

Acts 26:9-18 I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.
10 Which thing I also did in **Jerusalem**: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them.
11 And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.
12 Whereupon as I went to **Damascus** with authority and commission from the chief priests,
13 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.
14 And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.
15 And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.

16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;

17 Delivering thee from the people, (Jews)

and from **the Gentiles**, unto whom now I send thee,

18 • To open **their** eyes,

• and to turn **them** from darkness to light,

• and from the power of Satan unto God,

• that **they** may receive forgiveness of sins,

• and **inheritance among them (Jews that were ALREADY saved)** which are **sanctified by faith that is in me (Christ)**.

Saul immediately started preaching the very faith he once destroyed

(Gal 1:23) in **Jewish synagogues**:

Acts 9:20-22 And **straightway** he preached Christ in **the synagogues**, (Jews met in the synagogues) that he is the Son of God.

22 But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded **the Jews** which dwelt at **Damascus**, proving that this is very Christ.

After Saul's own conversion, the 'hunter' became the 'hunted' and he had to run for his life. He left **Damascus** and went to **Jerusalem**, to join up with the **disciples**, who knew his reputation, and were afraid to trust him. After Barnabas vouched for Saul, the apostles received him:

Acts 9:23-30 And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him:

24 But their laying await was known of Saul.

And they watched the gates day and night to kill him.

25 Then the disciples took him by night,

and let him down by the wall in a basket.

26 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.

27 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.

28 And **he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem**.

Saul was hounded by the Jews in Jerusalem also, and he fled to **Caesarea**:

(Acts 9:)²⁹ And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus,
and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him.
³⁰ Which when the brethren knew,
they brought him down to Caesarea, (Keep this city in mind.)
Then went back home to Tarsus:
and **sent him forth to Tarsus.**

In the **meanwhile, Peter** was a traveling man. He went **everywhere**:

Acts 9:32 And it came to pass, as **Peter passed throughout all quarters,** he came down also to the saints which dwelt at **Lydda.**

Peter visited believers in Lydda and Saron.

He healed a sick man of the palsy there:

Acts 9:35 And **all** that dwelt at **Lydda** and **Saron** saw him (the man that Peter healed), and turned to the Lord.

Peter stayed in **Joppa**, which was between **Caesarea** and **Gaza**,
and 30 miles north-west from **Jerusalem**, one of the oldest towns in **Asia**,
and the chief sea-port of **Judaea**.

There he resurrected a dead woman back to life (Acts 9: 36-43).

Acts 9:42 And it was known throughout all **Joppa**;
and **many believed in the Lord.**

Caesarea was the great Gentile city of Palestine,

on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea,
on the great road from Tyre to Egypt,
about 70 miles northwest of Jerusalem.

It was the capital of the Roman province of Judaea,

the seat of the governors and procurators,
and the headquarters of the Roman troops.

HERE IS AN 'IF-THEN' QUESTION TO THINK ABOUT:

'IF' when God answered the prayers of a **Gentile** in **Caesarea** where **Saul had been** (Acts 9:30)

and 'IF' God was **starting 'something NEW,'** namely '**the church, the body of Christ**' (as 'mid-Acts-ers' claim) with Paul (Saul) in Acts 9

'THEN' would it not be LOGICAL to expect that God would have 'Saul/Paul' **be the one** that God used to call these **Gentiles** to salvation?

But God did NOT chose Saul He chose PETER!!!

Acts 10:1-5 There was a certain man **in Caesarea** called **Cornelius**, a centurion of the band called the **Italian** band,

- 2
- A devout man,
 - and one that feared God with all his house,
 - which gave much alms to the people,
 - and prayed to God alway.

3 He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius.

4 And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, **Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.**

5 And now send men to Joppa, ("and call for one Saul, whose name will be called Paul" ---- **NO! That is NOT what God said!** The Lord **did NOT** tell the Gentile Cornelius to call for Saul (Paul) ---- even though he had **CONVENIENTLY been in CAESAREA the very place where Cornelius lived**) and **call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter:**

Peter preached not just to Cornelius alone but to **MANY Gentiles** who were with him, who he had gathered together in his house:

Acts 10:19-27 While **Peter** thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee.

20 Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.

21 Then **Peter** went down to the men which were sent unto him from **Cornelius**; and said, Behold, I (**Peter**) am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come?

(Acts 10:) 22 And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from **God** by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee. (God specifically chose Peter, not Paul.)

23 Then called he them in, and lodged them. And on the morrow **Peter** went away with them, and certain brethren from **Joppa** accompanied him.

24 And the morrow after they **entered into Caesarea**.

And **Cornelius** waited for them,
and had **called together his kinsmen and near friends**.

25 And as **Peter** was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him.

26 But **Peter** took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man.

27 And as he talked with him, he went in,

and **found many that were come together**.

The news travelled back to the **churches of Judaea** which were **in Christ** (Gal 1:22). But Peter was scolded by some Jews for his Gentile visit and meal:

Acts 11:1-3 And the apostles and brethren

that were **in Judaea** heard that

the Gentiles had also received the word of God.

2 And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem,

they that were of the circumcision contended with him,

3 Saying, Thou wentest in to men **uncircumcised**, and didst eat with them.

But Peter was prepared, as he had practiced his answer (Acts 11:4), that, without a doubt, it was **God's Spirit** that sent him there with the gospel of salvation for Cornelius and all his relatives and close friends:

Acts 11:12-14 And **the Spirit** bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house:

13 And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is **Peter**;

14 Who shall tell thee words, whereby **thou and all thy house shall be saved**.

Although later, Paul experienced both similar rejoicing with the **churches of God which in Judaea were in Christ Jesus** and also the same harrassment from the Jews, as Peter received (1 Thess 2:14-16) **it was PETER FIRST, and NOT PAUL** that God used to deliver the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to the first **Gentiles** after Christ's death and resurrection:

Acts 11:17-18 Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, **who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ**; what was I (Peter), that I could withstand God?

18 When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath **God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.**

Other than Peter going to Cornelius, the gospel was **only** going to the Jews even though the disciples had spread out to different cities in an effort to escape beatings, and jailings, and killings:

Acts 11:19-26 Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as **Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch**, preaching the word to **none but unto the Jews only.**

Then some men went to Antioch to preach the gospel:

20 And some of them were men of **Cyprus and Cyrene**, which, when they were come to **Antioch**, spake unto **the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus.**

21 And the hand of the Lord was with them: and **a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.**

The Jerusalem church heard about the happenings at Antioch, and sent Barnabas to minister there:

22 Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of **the church** which was in **Jerusalem**: and they sent forth **Barnabas**, that he should go as far as **Antioch.**

Barnabas saw God's grace given to the Gentiles while Saul was still in Tarsus where he had been all along during these Gentile salvations:

(Acts 11:) 23 Who, when he (Barnabas) came (to Antioch), and had **seen the grace of God**, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.

24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and **much people was added unto the Lord.**

25 **Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul:** (Tarsus is where Saul had been since Acts 9:30.)

26 And when he (Barnabas) had found him (Saul), **he brought him unto Antioch.**

And it came to pass, that a **whole year** they assembled themselves with **the church (at Antioch)**, and taught much people.

And **the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.**

Peter was imprisoned and miraculously released by an angel in Acts 12.

It was not until Acts 13, that God sent Saul out

to fulfill his commission from Acts 9:

Acts 13:1-3 Now there were in **the church that was at Antioch** certain **prophets and teachers**;

- as **Barnabas**,
- and Simeon that was called Niger,
- and Lucius of Cyrene,
- and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch,
- and **Saul.**

2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the **Holy Ghost** said, **Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.**

3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

It was not until Acts 13, that Saul's name was changed to PAUL:

Acts 13:9 Then **Saul, (who also is called Paul,)** filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him,

Initially, God chose PETER to go to the Gentiles

.... before He sent PAUL

as Peter testified to the apostles and council at Jerusalem:

Acts 15:7 And when there had been much disputing,

Peter rose up, and said unto them,

Men and brethren, ye know how that

a good while ago (speaking of when God sent him to Cornelius' house back in Acts 10, just one chapter after Saul's conversion)

God made choice among us, (Who did God 'choose'?

God chose PETER to go to the Gentiles first!)

that the Gentiles (not only Cornelius,

but MANY that were gathered at his house)

by my mouth (WHOSE mouth? PETER's mouth FIRST!)

should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.

For 'mid-Acts-hyper-dispensationalists' to say that God began what-they-call 'the church, the body of Christ' (meaning only those people who have been saved by PAUL's witness) starting in Acts 9 when Saul was saved is just **plain wrong**. That is NOT taught **in the scriptures**.

Does that matter to you? It ought to!

This is David Dowell, saying, "Think about it!"