

Wheelerburg Baptist Church 8/19/18
Acts 9:19b-31 “When God Saves a Sinner”**¹

Brad Brandt

Main Idea: When God truly saves a sinner, things happen, specifically, two things must and will occur. We see both in the example of Saul of Tarsus in Acts 9:19-31.

I. We see the evidence of salvation (19-22).

- A. Saul began to witness to the lost.
 - 1. He told them Jesus is the Son of God (20).
 - 2. He told them Jesus is the Messiah (22).
- B. Saul began to wait on the Lord.
 - 1. In order to serve God, we must know Him.
 - 2. In order to serve God well, we must spend time with Him.

II. We see the effect of salvation (23-31).

- A. Saul’s conversion affected the Jews (23-25).
 - 1. They rejected the message.
 - 2. They tried to eliminate the messenger.
- B. Saul’s conversion affected the disciples (26-27).
 - 1. Most responded with skepticism (27).
 - 2. Barnabas responded with acceptance (28).
 - He saw what others failed to see.
 - He believed what others failed to believe.
 - He did what others failed to do.
- C. Saul’s conversion affected his old friends (28-30).
 - 1. His goal wasn’t to be popular.
 - 2. His goal was to be obedient.
- D. Saul’s conversion affected the church (31).
 - 1. The church grew in strength.
 - 2. The church grew in numbers.

Response: When God does what God alone can do...

- 1. We should rejoice.
- 2. God should receive all the glory.

Scripture Reading: Psalm 107:1-16

God’s salvation is breathtaking to behold. And when we have experienced God’s saving grace, the psalmist says we are to *say so*, for salvation is always meant to put God on display.

I worked in two different factories one summer during college. The differences between the companies were obvious. It wasn’t simply that the factories produced different products. The main difference had to do with what was considered acceptable in terms of quality.

In the first factory, the objective was to get the product out the door. Not so at the second. I got in trouble at the second place once for wearing the wrong kind of belt. The reason? I was told that my belt might scratch the product, and that was totally unacceptable. When a piece of merchandise left the factory, it reflected on the name of the company.

The first factory didn’t seem to care. The second cared greatly.

Did you realize that God is greatly interested in quality control? He is, and particularly when He saves someone. What goes out the door reflects on Him.

What’s supposed to happen when God saves a sinner? We’ll see a vivid illustration as we open God’s Word this morning to Acts 9.

** Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelerburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

¹ For an earlier development of this text, see the Acts series preached at WBC in 2001.

The year was about AD 35. Saul of Tarsus was on his way to arrest Christians in Damascus, with letters of authorization from the high priest in his pocket. As he concluded his five day or so trek and neared the city, the Lord appeared to him in a blinding light. Saul fell to the ground and heard the words, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” And on that day, God blinded Saul’s physical eyes in order to open his spiritual eyes.

In Acts 9, Saul was gloriously saved. The Bible is clear that Saul’s conversion happened not by his initiative, but by the design of the Sovereign Lord. “This man is my chosen instrument,” the Lord later told Ananias (9:15). When Saul was dead-set on resisting Jesus and His people, the Lord stopped him in his tracks. And so God saved Saul and called him into ministry.

It was just the beginning. If Saul’s conversion was amazing—and it was—what happened following his turn-around is just as amazing.

Listen. When God saves a sinner, He *truly saves a sinner!* Sadly, in our day we’ve depreciated the salvation experience. A person makes a profession of faith, starts going to church once in awhile, but pretty much continues to live as he did before his profession of faith. And we think that’s “normal.” We’re told, “Well, change comes slowly.” If at all.

And so church rolls across the land are filled with the names of people who call themselves “Christian,” yet who live lives very much like their unsaved neighbors live. Simply put, Christ isn’t *real* to them. He’s a tag they’ve attached to their lives, but He’s not the Lord of their lives.

That’s not biblical Christianity, and the Bible warns us constantly to beware of that sort of imitation Christianity. “Watch out for false prophets,” Jesus said (Matt 7:15). And, “By their fruit you will recognize them (Matt 7:20).” I’m not sure that Jesus delivered any more unnerving statement than this one, “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven (Matt 7:21).”

It’s possible to profess Christ, yet not possess Christ. Simon the Sorcerer seems to have been such a man, whose story we pondered a few weeks ago in Acts 8.

You say, “Well, what should happen when a person becomes a Christian?” We need not wonder, for God’s Word gives us a wonderful picture in Acts 9. When God truly saves a sinner, two things must and will occur. We see both in the example of Saul of Tarsus in Acts 9:19-31.

I. We see the evidence of salvation (19-22).

When salvation occurs, there will be evidence. There will be fruit. In Saul’s case, here’s what it looked like. The evidence begins at the middle of verse 19, “Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus.”

Stop there for a moment. There’s a mark of a true believer. He wants to spend time with other believers. You don’t have to twist his arm to get him to come to church. He wants to be with God’s people. He knows he needs to be with God’s people, and he knows he is needed by God’s people.

Saul did. Right after becoming a Christian, he spent time with the disciples in Damascus. That’s a key term to identify Christians in Acts. “Disciples.” We are *followers*, we are *learners*, neither of which we can do alone.

The evidence continues in verse 20, “At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God.²¹ All those who heard him were astonished and asked, ‘Isn’t he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name?’

And hasn't he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?" ²² Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Christ."

When God saves a sinner, it shows. People can see it. You yourself can see it. In Saul's case, two evidences began to testify to the reality that God had turned him into a new person.

A. Saul began to witness to the lost. Notice he did it "at once" ["straightway" in the KJV]. There's a sense of urgency. If we've experienced the love of Christ, we can't contain it. We must share it.

By the way, how soon should a new Christian get involved in the mission of the church? I love what Jesus told the man He healed of demon-possession in Luke 8:39. The man wanted to stay with Jesus, but the Master told him, "Return home and tell how much God has done for you." So the man went away and told all over town how much Jesus had done for him."

You don't have to wait to start telling people about the Savior. In fact, your conversion gives you a wonderful open door.

"Sally, what's happened to you? You seem so different?" your neighbor says to you one Sunday afternoon. And you reply, "I'm so glad you noticed! I'm not the person I used to be. I've come to know the good news about Jesus. Can I tell you what He did for me?"

Saul didn't wait. He started telling people about Jesus right away. And where did he go? To the synagogues. To places where he knew he would find people who were just as he had been. He came to Damascus intending to arrest Christians, but now that he'd come to know Christ, he's intent on exhorting people to do as he had done.

In his witness he majored on two points.

1. *He told them Jesus is the Son of God* (20). This is the only place in Acts this title appears, although you'll find it at least fifteen times in Paul's epistles. To a first century Jew those words were considered blasphemous. God is one God. To assert that a man who walked on this planet was the *Son of God*, was unthinkable.

To call someone the "Son of God" was to communicate that individual was equal with God. Which is exactly what Saul intended to say. Later Paul elaborated in Colossians 1:15, "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation."

For Saul to preach this message shows a radical change had occurred in his thinking. The change was so dramatic it baffled his hearers. "Isn't he the man who caused havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name?" They knew what Saul had been like. They knew his past. And they knew why he'd come to Damascus. "What happened?" they wanted to know.

So Saul told them. He told them about the One who had changed his life, affirming that Jesus indeed is the Son of God.

2. *He told them Jesus is the Messiah* (22). Notice the end of verse 22. Luke says that Saul baffled the Jews. How? By "proving that Jesus is the Christ" [the Greek term for "Messiah"]. The Greek term translated "prove," *sumbibazo* means "to demonstrate, conclude, infer," hence, "to prove."

How did Saul do it? Obviously, he used the Old Testament Scriptures to make the point. But Luke gives us another indication of how Saul did it. He says that Saul "grew more and more powerful." Due to the tense of the verb [imperfect, passive, indicative], it could be translated, "Saul was being more empowered." That's key. Saul didn't witness in his own strength. He was *empowered*.

Who gave him the power? Jesus answered that question back in Acts 1:8, “You will receive *power* when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses...” Beloved, we are not to do our mission in our strength. He provides the power. That’s why the world can’t stop Christianity. There is a supernatural power at work.

So if you have Christ, then you have His Spirit. And if you have His Spirit, then you have all the power you need to do what we are seeing Saul do. When God saved Saul, he began to witness to the lost.

Will we do it the same way he did? No. We all have different gifts, some speaking and others serving, but the same Spirit who enables us to make Christ known to the lost people in our lives.

B. Saul began to wait on the Lord. Witnessing and waiting. Those are two marks of a genuine Christian. When a person gets saved, witnessing to the lost and waiting on the Lord become priorities in his or her life. They were in Saul’s.

Notice the first words of verse 23, “After many days had gone by.” Luke’s intent in Acts isn’t to give us a complete biography of Saul’s life. There seems to be a three year gap between verses 22 and 23. During that time Saul left Damascus and lived in Nabatean Arabia (that’s not modern day Arabia, but is the region from Damascus south to the Sinai peninsula).

We must insert Galatians 1:13-24 here. It’s there that Saul—then Paul—explains what happened:

“For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it.¹⁴ I was advancing in Judaism beyond many Jews of my own age and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers.¹⁵ But when God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased¹⁶ to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not consult any man,¹⁷ nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went immediately into Arabia and later returned to Damascus.¹⁸ Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Peter and stayed with him fifteen days.¹⁹ I saw none of the other apostles—only James, the Lord’s brother.²⁰ I assure you before God that what I am writing you is no lie.²¹ Later I went to Syria and Cilicia.²² I was personally unknown to the churches of Judea that are in Christ.²³ They only heard the report: “The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.”²⁴ And they praised God because of me.”

The order of events is somewhat difficult to reconstruct, but apparently the sequence went something like this: Saul was converted on the road to Damascus. Then he preached in the city of Damascus for a little while. At that point he left to go into the wilderness of Arabia (Gal 1:17). Following this “desert” experience, he returned and preached again in Damascus. This time in the wilderness and then back in Damascus lasted three years (Gal 1:18). Then he traveled to Jerusalem, as we’ll see when we come to verse 26. From there he returned to the regions of Syria and Cilicia (Gal 1:21).

Ponder those words in verse 23, “After many days had gone by.” Why the three year delay? Why didn’t Saul get on with his ministry? Didn’t the Lord tell Ananias that Saul was his chosen instrument to carry the gospel to the world? Yes He did, in verse 15. Why then did Saul go to Arabia?

It’s hard to say. For one thing, he had a lot of theological baggage to straighten out. Remember, he was a Pharisee to the nth degree, a legalist by his own admission in Philippians 3:6. A legalist doesn’t change overnight. Can a legalist change? Sure, if he’s willing to rethink his erroneous convictions on the basis of Scripture.

But that takes time. If it's true that Saul's trek into Arabia took him into the Sinai desert, there's quite a parallel. At Sinai Moses received the Law. And at Sinai Saul learned about grace, a subject a legalist desperately needs to ponder.²

I think we can learn a couple of vital lessons from Saul's "waiting" time.

1. *In order to serve God, we must know Him.* We cannot serve God unless we know Him. What's more...

2. *In order to serve God well, we must spend time with Him.* Maybe that's why we at times feel so powerless when we try to do something for God. We haven't been spending time with Him. There is no shortcut to holiness. To serve God, we must know Him. To serve Him well, we must spend time with Him.

Do you have a plan for a daily time with God? Is there some point in your daily routine where you get alone with God, open His Word for the purpose of getting to know Him better, and spend time talking with Him in prayer? If not, start today. Pick a time—first thing in the morning, last thing at night, whenever, and then prioritize that time. No Facebook. No TV. Just you and your open Bible and your Savior. We'll never do anything significant *for* Him unless we make spending time *with* Him a priority.

When God truly saves a person, there will be evidence of it, these two in particular, witnessing to the lost, and waiting on the Lord. So let's take some inventory. Do you see those two evidences in your life? Have you presented Christ to anyone recently? Have you been spending quality time with the Lord recently?

II. We see the effect of salvation (23-31).

Saul's conversion affected four groups, according to verses 23-31.

A. **Saul's conversion affected the Jews (23-25).** "After many days had gone by [after Saul's trip to the desert and after further preaching effort in Damascus—that is, after three years or so], the Jews conspired to kill him,²⁴ but Saul learned of their plan. Day and night they kept close watch on the city gates in order to kill him.²⁵ But his followers took him by night and lowered him in a basket through an opening in the wall."

The Lord never told Saul, nor us, that it would be easy. To the contrary He told Saul through Ananias, "I will show him how much he must suffer for my name (16)." And suffer he did.

The Jews' response is so typical. Verse 22 says that Saul baffled the Jews, "proving" that Jesus is the Christ. But verse 23 says they ignored the proof, and conspired to "kill" Saul. So...

1. *They rejected the message.* Then, going a step further...

2. *They tried to eliminate the messenger.*

Keep that in mind as you engage in evangelism. We can prove that Christianity is valid, but that doesn't mean people will accept it. They might say, "Well, I can't argue with what you're saying. You may be right, but it's just not right *for me.*"

For salvation to occur, it's not enough to *convince* people. They must also be *convicted*, and only the Holy Spirit can do that.

It was quite a turn around for Saul. The hunter became the hunted.

Churchill once said, "Nothing is so exhilarating as to be shot at without result." In God's providence, Saul discovered the plot and escaped from the city in a basket by night—kind of like the two spies did in Joshua 2, with the help of Rahab.

² Kent Hughes, *Acts*, p. 134.

Did Saul fail in Damascus? The truth is, he “failed” over and over again in his ministry. This wouldn’t be the last town he was run out of. But does rejection indicate failure? If it does, you’ll have a hard time explaining Noah’s ministry—no one responded to his preaching. And Jeremiah’s ministry—they threw him in a cistern to silence him. And most of all, Jesus’ ministry—they nailed Him to a cross. Did these servants of God fail? Certainly not.

Nor did Saul. Any time you do God’s will, you have succeeded, no matter how people respond. William Barclay suggests that this persecution actually attests to the effectiveness of Saul’s preaching. As he puts it, “No one persecutes a man who is ineffective.” George Bernard Shaw once said that the biggest compliment you can pay an author is to burn his books.³

When you’re persecuted, it’s proof that you’re doing something. The lukewarm don’t get attacked. The counterfeit Christian faces no opposition. But the obedient Christian will eventually face antagonism.

Saul’s conversion affected a second group in verses 26-27...

B. Saul’s conversion affected the disciples (26-27). Listen to verse 26, “When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple.”

That must have hurt Saul more than anything. When the world rejects you, it hurts. But when God’s own people, your brothers and sisters, hold you at arm’s length, the pain goes deep. The tense of the verb indicates this wasn’t a one time rejection either. He “tried to join” them could be literally translated “he was pressuring to be joined to.”

Remember, three years have passed since Saul’s conversion. He is now around 33 years old. But the Jerusalem Christians still view him as a fire-breathing, 30-year-old, Jesus-hating zealot. Oh, they’ve heard the story of his so-called change of heart, but they’re having trouble believing it.

“It’s a trick,” the church members must have muttered as they discussed Saul. “He’s pretending. He just wants to get inside so he can get our names, and then he’ll turn on us!”

Honestly, the disciples did the logical thing. It didn’t make sense to trust a man with Saul’s past. Some of the church members, no doubt, had lost loved ones because of his dirty work. So they did the prudent thing. You can’t blame them.

But wait. Sometimes choosing the safe alternative is simply a refusal to believe God.

1. *Most responded with skepticism* (27). Except for one man. Barnabas. Thank God for men like Barnabas.

2. *Barnabas responded with acceptance* (28). “But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus.”

When Saul desperately needed a friend in Damascus, God gave him Ananias. In Jerusalem, it was Barnabas. Praise God for risk-takers!

It’s been well said that the church owes Paul to the prayer of Stephen, to the forgiveness of Ananias, and to the big-heartedness of Barnabas. Barnabas was a man who refused to hold a person’s past against him. Barnabas took Saul, brought him to the apostles, told them Saul’s conversion story, and then stood by him.

Barnabas stands out for three reasons.

³ William Barclay, *Acts*, pp. 74-5.

•He saw what others failed to see. You say, “I don’t get it. How did Barnabas know Saul was for real?” The answer is, he got close enough to find out.

Let’s let that sink in. We don’t learn about people by osmosis. Nothing magical happens simply by sitting together in a church pew for an hour on Sunday morning. We don’t get to know people that way.

When most of the disciples looked at Saul, they beheld a problem to avoid. Not Barnabas. He saw God at work. He saw a brother, a man gifted by God for the work of God.

Most of us in the church, if we’re honest, tend to see each other in a very superficial way. What’s worse, we’re content with that. It’s safer that way—because if you really *see* people, you might have to do something about what you see.

Friends, we can talk about *love* all we want, but the simple truth is this. If we’re going to love each other as the Lord commands, we must take steps to do with each other what Barnabas did with Saul. He got to know him and therefore saw what others failed to see.

•He believed what others failed to believe. Remember the prediction the Lord gave to Ananias concerning Saul? “This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles (15).”

Apparently, Barnabas knew the promise God had given Ananias. My hunch is the other disciples knew it as well. But here’s the difference. Barnabas believed it. He put his weight into that promise and reasoned, “Well, Lord, if You’ve chosen Saul, what right do we have to shun him?” Barnabas believed God had a great future for Saul—and he wanted to be a part of it.

•He did what others failed to do. Namely, he reached out to Saul. He didn’t just talk about love and acceptance. He *did* it. He got involved. He got close to Saul, discovered the truth about him, and then took it upon himself to integrate Saul into the life of the Body.

I’m thankful there are many Barnabas’s in this church. I praise God for you, when I see you opening your lives up to the new people God is bringing to us.

But we have a need. We need more Barnabas’s. We need people who will come alongside those new to us, get to know them, teach them, in some cases take risks with them, and incorporate them into the life of the Body.

I challenge you. Be a Barnabas. Yes, keep smiling at each other on Sundays, but go further. After the service, get into a conversation with someone you don’t know very well. Maybe ask them to join you for lunch. Hear their story.

Why not invite a young Christian to your home for dessert after church this evening? Maybe invite a new Christian *and* someone who’s been saved awhile, and fellowship around the table. Ask them if they have any unsaved family or friends you can pray for, and perhaps in time, connect with for Jesus’ sake.

Ask the Lord to give you a couple of prayer partners. It need not be formal. Approach a couple of people and ask them to pray with you before or after a Sunday service on a regular basis.

Jesus picked twelve men and invested three years of His life into them. They ate together, traveled together, took boat rides together, discussed Scripture together, and prayed together.

You say, “I do those kinds of things with my family.” Good, but isn’t that what *we* are? Yes, we are the family of God.

C. Saul's conversion affected his old friends (28-30). Notice verse 28, “So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord.”

Remember, this is Saul’s old stomping ground, Jerusalem. These are the people who knew him before Christ entered his life. So he preached Christ to his old friends.

How’d they respond? Verse 29--“He talked and debated with the Grecian Jews, but they tried to kill him.” Saul did what Stephen had done (see 6:9)—he preached Christ to the Grecian Jews. And he received the same response. Rejection, just as predicted.

1. *His goal wasn’t to be popular.* Rather...

2. *His goal was to be obedient.* It should be no different for us.

Again, our responsibility isn’t to get results. It’s not to make people believe. Our job is to make the good news known, and leave the results up to God.⁴

In Saul’s case, here were the results. Verse 30, “When the brothers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.” Saul’s arrival in Jerusalem obviously stirred up a hornet’s nest. The believers thought it best for Saul—and for the good of the church—that Saul leave town. And so he did. He went to Tarsus, his home town.

By the way, we don’t see Saul again in Acts until Acts 11:25, which is when Barnabas recruited him for service in Antioch. That took place *seven years after* Saul left Jerusalem—that’s right, *seven* years later—and about ten years after his conversion.⁵

We learn a vital lesson from this. No one is indispensable. We may think we’re the only person that can carry on a ministry, but that’s not true. Pastor Kent Hughes shares some advice a friend once gave him, “When you think you are indispensable, go stick your hand in a pail of water, then pull it out and see what kind of hole is left.” Hughes continues, “The church will go on fine without you or me, and God sometimes lets us know that by putting us on the shelf for a while as he prepares us for further (and even greater) service.”⁶

Saul knew how to function on the front lines. He also knew how to serve in obscurity.

Perhaps you’re in a time of *waiting*. Be encouraged. God’s ways may not be ours, but He knows what He’s doing. You say, “But nothing seems to be happening in my life.” That doesn’t mean that nothing is happening. “It only means,” as James Boice puts it, “that we cannot see it. God is working. In fact, one of the joys of getting older in the Christian life is that you begin to see some of the things God is doing. Problems we

⁴ At this point we need to plug in Paul’s testimony in Acts 22:17-21. There Paul looks back and shares about an experience he had at this point in his life. He says that on a visit to the temple one day, God spoke to him. Here’s what he says happened: “When I returned to Jerusalem and was praying at the temple, I fell into a trance ¹⁸ and saw the Lord speaking. ‘Quick!’ he said to me. ‘Leave Jerusalem immediately, because they will not accept your testimony about me.’ ¹⁹ ‘Lord,’ I replied, ‘these men know that I went from one synagogue to another to imprison and beat those who believe in you.’ ²⁰ And when the blood of your martyr Stephen was shed, I stood there giving my approval and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.’ ²¹ “Then the Lord said to me, ‘Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles.’”

⁵ Lloyd Ogilvie comments: “When I look to those times out of the mainstream of what I thought the Lord was doing, I can see that I was being better prepared for fast-moving currents which later carried me on the high seas of adventure and effectiveness. The Lord will not use us until he has made us ready. Then we thank him for knowing what he is doing.” (In Kent Hughes, *Acts*, p. 137.)

⁶ Kent Hughes, p. 140.

prayed about earlier are being resolved. People whom we might have given up on early in life we now see changed. So do not give up. Keep your eyes on the Lord.”⁷

Good counsel. We learn one final group was affected by Saul’s conversion.

D. Saul’s conversion affected the church (31). “Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord.”

In the Greek text, the term “church” is singular. Yes, there are individual local churches. Paul wrote to the church in Philippi, and to the church in Ephesus, and so on. There is a sense of individuality about each local congregation, and each “church” has its own personality, style, and contribution to the kingdom ministry.

But the New Testament also emphasizes the corporate nature of *the Church*. No one assembly can rightly say, “We are the church. You are not.” William LaSor is right, “If the local church is truly part of the Body of Christ, then it is part of the Church universal.”⁸

Luke says it was a time of peace for the church. It certainly wasn’t a time for complacency and inactivity. Things were happening as the church grew in two ways.

1. *The church grew in strength.* The term “strengthened” could be translated “built up” [in the KJV it’s “edified”], and in other contexts refers to the erection of a building. There was internal growth. There was also external growth...

2. *The church grew in numbers.* If your child didn’t grow, you’d have reason for concern. You’d probably go to the doctor to find out what’s wrong. Healthy children are supposed to grow. The same is true with healthy churches.

A healthy church should experience growth in strength and numbers. Numbers aren’t everything, but they are an indicator that God is at work.

Acts 9:31 is an important verse in the book of Acts. It’s kind of like a mile marker on a highway. Verse 31 indicates that the early church has now completed phases 1, 2, & 3 of the mission Jesus gave in Acts 1:8. In less than ten years, the church had reached Judea, Galilee, and Samaria. That left only one phase to go, reaching *the Gentiles*, and Luke devotes the rest of Acts to that story.

We’ve seen today what happens when God saves a sinner. His salvation produces evidence...and effects...

Response: When God does what God alone can do...two things should happen.

1. *We should rejoice.*
2. *God should receive all the glory.*

⁷ James Boice, *Acts*, p. 162.

⁸ William LaSor, *Church Alive*, p. 144.