
a *Grace Notes* course

ACTS 200

The Acts of the Apostles

an expositional study
by Warren Doud

Lesson 204: **Acts 9:1-9**

ACTS, Lesson 204, Acts 9:1-9

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Acts 9:1-9**Acts 9:1**

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

Acts 9:1 Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, [NASB]

Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter

Saul's persecution of Christians continued full force through the period of time we have been involved with the activities of Philip. The word "yet" here reminds us that there had been no relaxing of the terrible ordeal of the Christians.

Saul was determined to destroy the new church of Christ!. The word "breathing" (Gk. **pnew**) is used quite often by Greek writers to describe a vehement and hostile affection of the mind. We have already seen how he reveled in the death of Stephen! Now, the threatening and slaughter had come to be Saul's very breath, like a warhorse who sniffed the smell of battle. ¹

Some examples ²:

Theocritus, *Idylls*, XXII verse 82, **ej- messon sunagon, fonon ajlaloisi pneonte**~ "They came into the assembly, breathing mutual slaughter."

Euripides, using the same form, in *Iphigenia*, **pur pheousa kai fonon** "breathing out fire and slaughter"

And Aristophanes, referring to all the preparations for war, **alla pneonta- logca- kai leukolofou- trufaleia-, kai phlhka-, kai knhmida-, kai qumou- ehptaboeiou**~ "They breathed spears, and pikes, and helmets, and crests, and greaves, and the fury of redoubted heroes."

¹ Robertson, Acts 9:1

² Clarke

The phrase is also familiar in the Old Testament, so that we have in Psalm 27:12, "one that breathes out violence", or cruelty. This shows the inward disposition of Saul's mind, his rage, wrath, malice, envy, and blood thirstiness that he was full of. Yet, we know, the same mouth that was full of cursing and bitterness, was later to be used in the fullness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ.

Luke was a master of the Greek language, so he chose terms which best expressed Saul's desperation and resentment and the incessant focus on his objective, the destruction of Christians. This malicious zeal was already made apparent to us in Acts 8:3, where we see Saul entering into every house and forcibly dragging men and women and committing them to prison. ³

Threatening = "denunciation"; denotes intense activity and energy in persecution

Slaughter = "murder"; He rejoiced in their death and he joined in condemning them.

READ Acts 26:10,11. Saul seems to have been directly involved in putting Christians to death.

against the disciples of the Lord

Not against wicked men, murderers, thieves; but as an aggravation of his cruelty, against harmless and innocent followers of Jesus.

went unto the high priest

This matter at least had the color of religion, and the high priest was the correct person to ask for written accreditation for Saul to take to other cities. Such letters had to be granted by the Sanhedrin, but it was through the high priest that the business would be negotiated.

Acts 9:2

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.

Acts 9:2 and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and

³ Gill

women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. [NASB]

Letters to Damascus to the synagogues

Namely, letters to the Jewish leadership in Damascus.

Acts 22:5, “As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished.”

The “estate of all the elders” is the Sanhedrin.

Topic: Sanhedrin

Saul wasn’t satisfied just to drive all of the believers from Jerusalem, now he was determined to hound them wherever they went for shelter.

Damascus

[MAP]

Damascus was for many centuries the metropolis of all Syria. It is fifty miles from the Mediterranean; from which it is separated by lofty mountains. Two rivers run through it. It is one of the most ancient cities in the world. It existed in the time of Abraham, Genesis 14:15; and how long before is not known. The city of Damascus has always been a place of considerable commerce, owing to its being the rendezvous for all the pilgrims from the north of Asia, on their road to and from the temple of Mecca. It is surrounded with strong walls, which have nine gates, and is between four and five miles in circumference. Damascus, like other places of importance, has passed through the hands of many masters.

It was captured and ruined by Tiglath Pileser, who carried away its inhabitants to Kin, beyond the Euphrates, about 740 years before the Christian era; and thus was fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, Isaiah 17:1-3, and that of Amos, Amos 1:4, 5.

It was taken by Sennacherib, and by the generals of Alexander the Great.

Metellus and Laelius seized it, during the war of Pompey with Tigranes; before Christ 65. It continued under the dominion of the Romans till the Saracens took possession of it, in A.D. 634.

It was besieged and taken by Teemour Lenk, A.D. 1400, who put all the inhabitants to the sword.

The Egyptian Mamelukes repaired Damascus when they took possession of Syria; but the Turkish Emperor Selim having defeated them at the battle of Aleppo.

In 1516, Damascus was brought under the government of the Turks.

In the time of St. Paul it was governed by “King” Aretas, whose father, Obodas, had been governor of it under Augustus. There is some information about Aretas in Conybeare and Howson.

Topic: Damascus

Topic: Synagogues

any of this Way

This is a common term in Acts for describing Christianity as a Way of Life.

READ Acts 19:8-9, 22-23; 22:4; 24:14,22.

Jesus referred to Himself as “The Way, the Truth, and the Life...” in John 14:6.

The ancient Jewish writers, the contributors to the Talmud and the commentaries, designated the whole doctrine and practice of Christians by euphemisms such as **DEREC HANOTSARIM**, meaning “the sect of Nazarenes”, by which they mean “Christians.” It seems that the Jewish writers preferred not to mention the name of Christ, so that in most discussions of Christians, substitute phrases were used.

Saul would have authority to take Jewish men and women into custody, but he would have no legal authority over Gentile believers. There were very few Gentile believers at this time, but they would have been outside of the Jewish jurisdiction.

Almost every city had a Sanhedrin. The number of members was determined by the number of Jewish people in the city. But every local Sanhedrin was subordinate to the Great Sanhedrin of Jerusalem.

It was actually Julius Caesar and Augustus who formally gave Roman permission for the Jewish Sanhedrin to have jurisdiction over Jews in Judea.

That he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

“Bound” means that Saul meant to reduce these people to a condition of sheer helplessness, like his other victims seen in 8:3. The fact of his persecuting women is mentioned by Paul himself as having been especially sinful, and was undoubtedly one of the reasons he called himself the “chief of sinners.”

Acts 9:3

And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:

Acts 9:3 And it came about that as he journeyed, he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; [NASB]

Topic: Roads to Damascus

There has always been great speculation as to what this light was. Some say great lightning, followed by thunder, followed by the Lord speaking in a great and terrible voice. However, we only have the various mentions of this event in the Bible for any real answers.

Acts 22:6, “And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me.”

Likewise, in Acts 26:13, “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.”

Since this event took place a midday, the great light must have been very bright, to have been so remarkable in the full light of day.

Barnes makes the following remarks: ⁴

- (1) God was accustomed to appear to the Jews in a cloud; in a pillar of smoke, or of fire; in that special splendor which they [named] the Shechinah. In this way he went before them into the land of Canaan, Exodus 13:21,22; compare Isaiah 4:5,6. This appearance or visible manifestation they called the “glory of” YAHWEH, Isaiah 6:1-4; Exodus 16:7, “In the

morning ye shall see the glory of the Lord”; Acts 9:10; Leviticus 9:23; Numbers 14:10; 16:19, 42; 24:16; 1 Kings 8:11; Ezekiel 10:4. See Luke 2:9, “The glory of the Lord shone round about them.”

- (2) The Lord Jesus, in his transfiguration on the mount, had been encompassed with that glory. See Matthew 17:1-5.
- (3) He had spoken of a similar glory with which he had been invested before his incarnation, and to which he would return; John 17:5, “And now, Father, glorify thou me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was”; Matthew 25:31, “The Son of Man shall come in his glory.” Compare Matthew 16:27; 19:28. To this glory he had returned when he left the earth.
- (4) It is a sentiment which cannot be shown to be incorrect, that the various appearances of “the angel of Yahweh,” and of Yahweh, mentioned in the Old Testament, were appearances of the Messiah the God who would be incarnate — the special protector of his people. See Isaiah 6; compare with John 12:41.
- (5) When the Lord Jesus appeared to Saul, it would have been in his appropriate glory and honor as the ascended Messiah. That he did appear is expressly affirmed.
- (6) This was an occasion when, if ever, such an appearance was proper. The design was to convert an infuriated persecutor, and to make him an apostle. To do this, it was necessary that he should see the Lord Jesus, 1 Corinthians 9:1,2. The design was further to make him an eminent instrument in carrying the gospel to the Gentiles. A signal miracle; a demonstration that he was invested with his appropriate glory (John 17:5); a calling up a new witness to the fact of his resurrection, and of his solemn investment with glory in the heavens, seemed to be required in thus calling a violent persecutor to be an apostle and friend.
- (7) We are to regard this appearance, therefore, as the reappearance of the Shechinah, the Son of God invested with appropriate glory, appearing to convince an enemy of his ascension, and to change him from a foe to a friend.

Topic: Glory of God

How long did the light persist? From the fact that the Messiah was making a special appearance to Saul, quite clearly similar to all former appearances down through history, such as those described by Barnes (above), the light undoubtedly lasted as long as Christ was present.

⁴ Barnes, Acts 9:3

Acts 9:4

And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?

Acts 9:4 and he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" [NASB]

Some old paintings represent Saul has having been struck down from a horse by lightning; but this is absolutely without foundation. As Clarke says, "Painters are, in almost every case, wretched commentators."

In Acts 26:14, Paul states "We were all fallen to the earth." But here, in 9:7, it states that the men "stood speechless." But there doesn't need to be any contradiction. If the men were stunned by the great light, so much that they went down to the ground in some way, they could well have been back on their feet some moments later, when the conversation between Saul and Christ occurred.

It's interesting to compare Daniel's experience in the visions that he experienced.

Dan. 8:17, "So he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end shall be the vision."

Dan. 10:8, "Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision; and there remained no strength in me, for my comeliness (vigor) in me was turned into corruption, and I retained no strength."

In persecuting the Christians, Saul was persecuting Christ. We are the body of Christ, and there is a perfect union of Christians with Christ (Positional Truth).

READ John 15:1-6

Acts 9:5

And he said, Who are you, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom you persecute: it is hard for you to kick against the goads.

Acts 9:5 And he said, "Who art Thou, Lord?" And He said, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, [NASB]

Note the phrase not included in the NASB.

The question "Who are you, Lord?" indicates that Saul did not know at first who was speaking to him. The Greek **kurie** is a common term for "Sir" even today in Greece. A modern Greek would say, **kal imera kurie!** to say "Good morning sir." in polite address.

The words from here on, through the middle of verse 6, are not found in any Greek manuscripts. The NASB version shows the omission.

According to Clarke, not only are these comments not found in Greek manuscripts, that are not found in many other language translation, including the Arabic, Syriac, Coptic, Sahidic, and other versions. It is found in the Vulgate, the Ethiopic, and the Armenian.⁵ Clarke surmises that these phrases were borrowed from Acts 26:14, and from some marginal notes, by translators of various periods.

So Jesus said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting; now arise and go into the city, and it shall be told you what you must do."

Acts 9:6

And trembling and astonished he said, Lord, what will you have me do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told you what you must do.

Acts 9:6 but rise, and enter the city, and it shall be told you what you must do. "[NASB]

Christ could have told Saul immediately what His plans for him were, but he chose to communicate the message through one of those very people (Ananias) whom Saul was intending to capture and bring to Jerusalem.

Acts 9:7

And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.

⁵ Clarke, Acts 9:5

Acts 9:7 And the men who traveled with him stood speechless, hearing the voice, but seeing no one. [NASB]

The men were **ejneō**~ “stupified.” They heard something that sounded like a voice, but they didn’t see the Lord. This statement is a strong indication, within this context alone, that the Lord actually did appear to Saul, although some have argued “not necessarily.” But Paul’s own words in 1 Cor. 9:1 and 15:8 show that there was an actual appearance of the Person of Christ.

1 Cor. 9:1, “Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?”

1 Cor. 15:8, “And last of all, He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.”

In Acts 22:9, Paul says, “And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.” This indicates that the men heard a noise but did not understand the Lord’s words to Saul.

Acts 9:8

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.

Acts 9:8 And Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; and leading him by the hand, they brought him into Damascus. [NASB]

He saw no man.

Some manuscripts have **oujpena**, “no man”, while others have **oujden**, “nothing.” Either word indicates that he was quite blind. So his companions led him by the hand to Damascus. He is as helpless as a child; undoubtedly the blindness, which lasted several days, gave him an opportunity to think deeply about what the Lord had said to him, and eventually what he would hear from Ananias.

This is the last we hear of those who were traveling with Saul. They were undoubtedly traveling with him to help him to arrest Christians and escort them in bondage back to Jerusalem. They could only have been mystified about the affair, and Saul had little information to give them

about what had happened. After delivering Saul to Ananias’ care, they probably returned to Jerusalem.

Acts 9:9

And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

Acts 9:9 And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank. [NASB]

Saul was probably in a state of some shock and had no appetite for food for three days. All of these circumstances would have contributed to this.

The period without food may have been as little as 36 hours, or less, if the three days were reckoned from the evening of the day he arrived in Damascus until the morning of the second day following, when Ananias visited him. Similarly the three days were counted in which Jesus lay in the grave, from Friday evening until Sunday morning; that is, not a full 72 hours.

Damascus

from “The Life and Epistles of St. Paul” by Conybeare and Howson.

Damascus is the oldest city in the world. Its fame begins with the earliest patriarchs and continues to modern times. While other cities of the East have risen and decayed, Damascus is still what it was. It was founded before Baalbec and Palmyra, and it has outlived them both. While Babylon is a heap in the desert, and Tyre a ruin on the shore, it remains what is called in the prophecies of Isaiah, “the head of Syria.” (Isa. 7:8) Abraham’s steward was Eliezer of Damascus (Gen. 15:2), and the limit of his warlike expedition in the rescue of Lot was “Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus.” (Gen. 14:15) How important a place it was in the flourishing period of the Jewish monarchy we know from the garrisons which David placed there (2 Sam. 8:6; 1 Chron. 18:6), and from the opposition it presented to Solomon (1 Kings 11:24). The history of Naaman and the Hebrew captive, Elisha, and Gehazi, and of the proud preference of its fresh rivers to the thirsty waters of Israel, are familiar to everyone.

And how close its relations continued to be with the Jews, we know from the chronicles of Jeroboam and Ahaz and the prophecies of Isaiah and Amos. Its mercantile greatness is indicated by Ezekiel in the remarkable words addressed to Tyre, "Syria was thy merchant by reason of the multitude of the wares of thy making; they occupied in this fairs with emeralds, purple, and brodered work, and fine linen, and coral, and agate. Damascus was thy merchant in the multitude of the wares of thy making, for the multitude of all riches, in the wine of Helbon, and white wool." (Eze. 27:16,18)

Leaving the Jewish annals, we might follow its history through continuous centuries, from the time when Alexander sent Parmenio to take it, while the conqueror himself was marching from Tarsus to Tyre, to its occupation by Pompey, to the letters of Julian the Apostate, who describes it as "the eye of the East," and onward through its golden days, when it was the residence of the Ommiad Caliphs, and the metropolis of the Mahommedan world, and through the period when its fame was mingled with that of Saladin and Tamarlane, to our own days, when the praise of its beauty is celebrated by every traveler from Europe. It is evident, to use the words of Lamartine, that, like Constantinople, it was a 'predestinated capital.' Not is it difficult to explain why its freshness has never faded through all the series of vicissitudes and wars.

Among the rocks and brushwood at the base of Antilibanus are the fountains of a copious and perennial stream, which, after running a course of no great distance to the southeast, loses itself in a desert lake. But before it reaches this dreary boundary it has distributed its channels over the intermediate space and left a wide area behind it rich with prolific vegetation. These are the "streams from Lebanon" which are known to us in the imagery of Scripture (Cant. 4:15); the "rivers of Damascus," which Naaman not unnaturally preferred to all the "waters of Israel." (2 Kings 5:12) By Greek writers the stream is called Chrysorrhoeas, or the "river of gold." And this stream is the inestimable unexhausted treasure of Damascus, The habitations of men must always have been gathered around it, as the Nile has

inevitably attracted an immemorial population to its banks. The desert is a fortification round Damascus.

The river is its life. It is drawn out into watercourses, and spread in all directions. For miles around it is a wilderness of gardens, gardens with roses among the tangled shrubberies and with fruit on the branches overhead. Everywhere among the trees the murmur of unseen rivulets is heard. Even in the city, which is in the midst of the garden, the clear rushing of the current is a perpetual refreshment. Every dwelling has its fountain; and at night, when the sun has set behind Mount Lebanon, the lights of the city are seen flashing on the waters.

It is not to be wondered at that the view of Damascus, when the dim outline of the gardens has become distinct, and the city is seen gleaming white in the midst of them, should be universally famous. All travelers in all ages have paused to feast their eyes with the prospect; and the prospect has always been the same. It is true that in the Apostle's day there were no cupolas and no minarets; Justinian had not built St. Sophia, and the caliphs had erected no mosques. But the white buildings of the city gleamed then, as they do now, in the center of a verdant inexhaustible paradise. The Syrian gardens, with their low walls and waterwheels, and careless mixture of fruits and flowers, were the same then as they are now. The same figures would be seen in the green approaches to the town, camels and mules, horses and asses, with Syrian peasants and Arabs from beyond Palmyra. We know the very time of the day when Saul was entering these shady avenues. It was at mid-day. The birds were silent in the trees. The hush of noon was in the city. The sun was burning fiercely in the sky. The persecutor's companions were enjoying the cool refreshment of the shade after their journey; and his eyes rested with satisfaction on those walls which were the end of his mission, and contained the victims of his righteous zeal.

Damascus

by Dr. Glenn Carnegiey

1. The city's name has been Damascus from about 1500 BC until the present.

Egyptian inscriptions speak of TI-MAS-KU and SA-RA-MAS-KI between the 1500's and 1200's BC.

The Arab name is DIMASHK ESH-SHAM or "DIMASHK of the Left". The meaning of DIMASHK or Damascus is unknown, but the ESH-SHAM means "the Left" and is to be compared to YEMEN or "The Right".

2. The city is located in the NW corner of the Ghuta, a fertile plain about 2300 feet above sea level, East of Mt. Hermon.

The Eastern part of the Ghuta, east of the city, is called the "Meadow Land" of Damascus, the EL-MERJ. The River Barada (Abana) flows through Damascus and waters the plains beyond the city.

A few miles south of the city the river NAHR EL-AWAJ flows through the plain as well. It is surrounded on three sides by barren hills and on the east beyond the GHUTA by the desert. The city is marked by fountains and streams, orchards and fields, especially in the spring.

In Arabic literature Damascus is described as an earthly paradise.

The Barada River is the lifeblood of the city, coming out of the hills in a narrow gorge, it spreads out into many streams through the Ghuta and loses itself into the desert, where it vanishes in the marshes.

Its beauty can only be appreciated if seen from the desert point of view, and especially in the spring when its fruit trees bloom. (Apricot, pomegranates, walnuts and many others.

3. The Structure of the City.

The main part of the city runs east to west along the south bank of the river.

A long street called the Meidan stretches along the southern part of the city, passing beyond the city wall and terminating at the BAWWABET ALLAH ("The gate of God"), which is the starting-point of the annual HAJ, the annual pilgrimage to Mecca.

In the Greek and Roman period, a long colonnaded street ran through the city. (Acts 9:11) DERB EL-MUSTAKIM.

- Archaeologists have uncovered parts of the Street Called Straight

- It runs from east to west with the Jewish Quarter on the South and the Christian quarter on the North.

- On the West end of town the street ends in the SUK EL- MIDHATIYEH, a bazaar built by MIDHAT PASHA, north of which is the Moslem quarter of the city, in which are the citadel and the Great Mosque.

Part of the city wall has been preserved with a foundation going back to Roman times, with Arab rebuilding above it.

Biblical sites pointed out to the tourist are spurious.

- Traditional site of Paul's escape over the wall in a basket. II Cor 11:33; Acts 9:25

- NAAMAN's House. II Kings 5:1ff

4. Industry associated with Damascus.

It always was famous for its textile industry, from which the English word "Damask" is taken.

In the Middle Ages it was famous for the "Damascus blades" of the time of the Crusaders.

Timur (Tamerlane), the son of Genghis Khan, took the city and ended its armament production by carrying its armorers off to Samerkand, but the city went right on after 1399 AD.

5. Early History of the City of Damascus.

The earliest reference to it in Scripture is Genesis 15:2, in which Abraham complains that this "Son of possession", BEN MESHEQ, ELIEZER, the DAMESHEQ (Damascus), will "inherit his house."

This would indicate a date for the city of, at the oldest, 1800 BC.

Eliezer the Damascusite was from Damascus and the city name would thus mean something on the order of "The one who possesses or has possessions." (Based on Aram. relative pronoun DIY + MESHEQ).

The city is mentioned one additional time during Abraham's time, in Genesis 14:15, where Abraham is said to have pursued the four kings of

Mesopotamia "as far as Hobah, which is on the left hand (North) of DAMASCUS."

6. Damascus during the time of David.

Damascus allied itself with neighboring Aramaean cities against David. II Sam 8:5ff

The center of Aramaic power during David's time was Zobah, whose king Hadadezer, was executed by David after the defeat of the allied army.

Unfortunately, Rezon, ben Eliada, an officer in Hadadezer's army escaped and built an army of bandits and ultimately seized the city of Damascus, where he ruled as king and built a powerful kingdom. I Kings 11:23ff

Rezon continued to be a thorn in the side of Solomon. I K 11:25.

7. The Aramaean Kingdom. (950-732 BC).

Rezon may or may not be identical with Biblical Hezion, who fathered Tab-rimmon, Who in turn fathered Ben-hadad. I K 15:18

Ben-hadad (BIR-IDRI) is the first king after Rezon of whom we have any first-hand knowledge, when he became the nemesis of Ahab.

He played Israel against Judah beautifully to the detriment of both.

- ASA hired him with a bribe to attack Israel to relieve him. I K 15:18ff

- Either the above Ben-Hadad I or his successor, Ben-Hadad II, defeated Omri of Israel, annexed several Israelite cities, and secured the right to have Aramaic "streets" or Bazaars in Samaria, in about 880 BC.

Ben-Hadad II, then, campaigned incessantly against Israel.

(1) Scripture account of his campaigns against the Jews is found in I Kings 20:22.

(2) He won the first encounter, but later lost twice to Ahab.

(3) He became a prisoner of Ahab after the Battle of Aphek, but was treated with great consideration by Ahab.

(4) Ahab demanded only the return of his cities and the reciprocal right of setting up "Streets" in Damascus as penalty.

(5) Primary enemy was Assyria, who under Shalmaneser III, attacked a coalition of 10 states including Israel & Damascus at the Battle of Qarqar in 854 BC, though the battle was a draw, neither side winning a decisive victory.

(6) The Assyrians attacked Ben-Hadad twice more, in 842 and 846, with no more decisive results than at Qarqar.

(7) With the death of Ahab at Ramoth-Gilead the only threat to Damascus other than Assyria was ended.

In about 844 BC Hazael murdered Ben-Hadad and usurped the throne.

(1) He was attacked by the Assyrians in 842 and 839, again without any decisive outcome.

(2) From then until about 810 BC, the Assyrians stayed home, allowing the Aramaeans a free hand against the Jews.

In 803 BC, Mari' (Ben-Hadad III, Son of Hazael) was forced to become a vassal of Ramman-Nirari III of Assyria. II K 13:3

This allowed tremendous expansion of Israel under Jeroboam II.

The Assyrians attacked Damascus again in 773 BC Tiglath-Pileser III, (745-727 BC) campaigned in the West often, bringing about the payment of tribute by Rezin in 738 BC

Rezin joined with Pekah of Israel to force Judah into an anti-Assyrian coalition. II K 15:37; 16:5; Isaiah 7.

In 734 BC the Assyrians advanced and placed Damascus under siege, taking the city in 732 BC. Rezin was executed and the city was destroyed.

8. Subsequent to its destruction by the Assyrians, the city lost most of its prominence and is only incidentally mentioned during the remainder of the OT. Jer. 49:23ff; Ezek 27:18; 47:16.

9. After the Persians took over, the city regained its prosperity, though not its command position.

10. When the Seleucid kingdom of Syria was established in 301BC, its capitol city was Antioch on the coast, and the center of power shifted west to the seacoast from the interior.

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11. In 111 BC the Syrian kingdom was divided, and Antiochus Cyzicenus became king of Coele-Syria (Transjordan), and made Damascus his capitol.

- His successors, Demetrius Eucerus and Antiochus Dionysus, had problems including wars with the Parthians and with Alexander Jannaeus of the Judahite Hasmonean line as well as with Aretas, the Nabatean, who took Damascus in 85 BC.

- Tigranes, the Armenian, ruled thereafter until the Romans took the city under Pompey in 64BC.

12. Under Roman Rule its history is obscure, but the Nabateans seem to have gained control of Damascus for long periods of time.

- Roman coins indicate that the Romans held it from 31 BC to 33 AD.

- Aretas IV, king of Nabatea held it and appointed an ETHNARCH to rule the city after this. II Cor 11:32

- Under NERO it reverted back to Roman rule.

13. During the Christian era it played a minor role in history, though it is obvious that Paul's association with the city at his conversion drew some attention to the site. Acts 9:1-25

- All the NT references to it are to be related to that conversion.

- Under the Emperor of the early Byzantine period the city continued to be an unimportant city, second to Antioch.

- Passed out of Christian control to the Arabs in 634 AD.

- Damascus has been a Moslem city ever since.

Roads to Damascus

from "The Life and Epistles of St. Paul" by Conybeare and Howson.

No journey was ever taken on which so much interest is concentrated as this of St. Paul from Jerusalem to Damascus. It is so critical a passage in the history of God's dealings with man, and we feel it to be so closely bound up with all our best knowledge and best happiness in this life, and with all our hopes for the world to come, that the mind is delighted to dwell upon it, and we are eager to

learn or imagine all its details. The conversion of Saul was like the call of a second Abraham.

But we know almost more of the Patriarch's journey through this same district, from the north to the south, than we do of the Apostle's in the opposite direction. It is easy to conceive of Abraham traveling with his flocks and herds and camels. The primitive features of the East continue still unaltered in the desert, and the Arabian sheik still remains to us a living picture of the patriarch of Genesis. But before the first century of the Christian era, the patriarchal life in Palestine had been modified, not only by the invasions and settlements of Babylonia and Persia, but by large influxes of Greek and Roman civilization. It is difficult to guess what was the appearance of Saul's company on that memorable occasion. We neither know how he traveled nor who his associates were, nor where he rested on his way nor what road he followed from the Judean to the Syrian capital.

His journey must have brought him somewhere into the vicinity of the Sea of Tiberias. But where he approached the nearest to the shores of this sacred lake, whether he crossed the Jordan where, in its lower courses, it flows southwards to the Dead Sea, or where its upper windings enrich the valley at the base of Mount Hermon, we do not know. And there is one thought which makes us glad that it should be so. It is remarkable that Galilee, where Jesus worked so many of His miracles, is the scene of none of those transactions which are related in the Acts. The blue waters of Tiberias, with their fishing boats and towns on the brink of the shore, are consecrated in the Gospels. A greater than Paul was here. When we come to the travels of the Apostles, the scenery is no longer limited and Jewish, but catholic and widely extended, like the Gospel which they preached; and the Sea, which will be so often spread before us in the life of St. Paul, is not the little Lake of Gennesareth, but the great Mediterranean, which washed the shores and carried the ships of the historical nations of antiquity.

Two principal roads can be mentioned, one of which probably conducted the travelers from Jerusalem to Damascus. The track of the caravans,

in ancient and modern times, from Egypt to the Syrian capital, has always led through Gaza and Ramleh, and then, turning eastwards about the borders of Galilee and Samaria, has descended near Mount Tabor towards the Sea of Tiberias; and so, crossing the Jordan a little to the north of the Lake by Jacob's Bridge, proceeds through the desert country which stretches to the base of Antilibanus. A similar track from Jerusalem falls into this Egyptian road in the neighborhood of Djenin, at the entrance of Galilee; and Saul and his company may have traveled by this route, performing the journey of one hundred and thirty-six miles, like the modern caravans, in about six days.

But at this period, that great work of Roman road making, which was actively going on in all parts of the empire, must have extended, in some degree, to Syria and Judea; and, if the Roman roads were already constructed here, there is little doubt that they followed the direction indicated by the later itineraries. This direction is from Jerusalem to Neapolis (the ancient Shechem), and thence over the Jordan to the south of the Lake, near Scythopolis, where the soldiers of Pompey crossed the river, and where the Galilean pilgrims used to cross it, at the time of the festivals, to avoid Samaria. From Scythopolis it led to Gadara, a Roman city, the ruins of which are still remaining, and so to Damascus.

Whatever road was followed in Saul's journey to Damascus, it is almost certain that the earlier portion of it brought him to Neapolis, the Shechem of the Old Testament, and the Nablus of the modern Samaritans. This city was one of the stages in the Itineraries. Dr. Robinson followed a Roman pavement for some considerable distance in the neighborhood of Bethel. This northern road went over the elevated ridges which intervene between the valley of the Jordan and the plain on the Mediterranean coast. As the travelers gained the high ground, the young Pharisee may have looked back, and when he saw the city in the midst of its hills, with the mountains of Moab in the distance, confident in the righteousness of his cause, he may have thought proudly of the 125th Psalm: "The hills stand about Jerusalem, even so standeth the Lord round about His people, from

this time forth for evermore." His present enterprise was undertaken for the honor of Zion. He was blindly fulfilling the words of One who said; "Whosoever killeth you will think that he does God service." (John 16:2)

Passing through the hills of Samaria, from which he might occasionally obtain a glimpse of the Mediterranean on the left, he would come to Jacob's Well, at the opening of that beautiful valley which lies between Ebal and Gerizim. This, too, is the scene of a Gospel history. The same woman with whom Jesus spoke might be again at the well as the Inquisitor passed. But as yet he knew nothing of the breaking down of the "middle wall of partition." (Eph. 2:14) He could, indeed, have said to the Samaritans, "Ye worship ye know not what, we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews." (John 4:22) But he could not have understood the meaning of those other words, "The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in Jerusalem, nor yet in this mountain, worship the Father, the true worshippers shall worship Him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:21,23)

His was not yet the Spirit of Christ. The zeal which burnt in him was that of James and John, before their illumination, when they wished (in this same district) to call down fire from heaven, even as Elias did, on the inhospitable Samaritan village. (Luke 9:51-56) Philip had already been preaching to the poor Samaritans, and John had revisited them, in company with Peter, with feelings wonderfully changed. But Saul knew nothing of the little Church of Samaritan Christians, or, if he heard of them and delayed among them, he delayed only to injure and oppress. The Syrian city was still the great object before him. And now, when he had passed through Samaria and was entering Galilee, the snowy peak of Mount Hermon, the highest point of Antilibanus, almost as far to the north as Damascus, would come into view. This is that tower of "Lebanon which looketh towards Damascus." (Cant. 7:4) It is already the great landmark of his journey, as he passes through Galilee towards the sea of Tiberias, and the valley of the Jordan.

Synagogues

[from "Sketches of Jewish Social Life", by Alfred Edersheim, Chapters 16 and 17.]

Synagogues: Their Origin, Structure and Outward Arrangements

It was a beautiful saying of Rabbi Jochanan (Jer. Ber. v. 1), that he who prays in his house surrounds and fortifies it, so to speak, with a wall of iron. Nevertheless, it seems immediately contradicted by what follows. For it is explained that this only holds good where a man is alone, but that where there is a community prayer should be offered in the synagogue. We can readily understand how, after the destruction of the Temple, and the cessation of its symbolical worship, the excessive value attached to mere attendance at the synagogue would rapidly grow in public estimation, till it exceeded all bounds of moderation or reason. Thus, such Scriptural sayings as Isaiah 66:20, 55:6 and Psalm 82:1 were applied to it.

The Babylon Talmud goes even farther. There we are told (Ber. 6 a), that the prayer which a man addresses to God has only its proper effect if offered in the synagogue; that if an individual, accustomed to frequent every day the synagogue, misses it for once, God will demand an account of him; that if the Eternal finds fewer than ten persons there gathered, His anger is kindled, as it is written in Isaiah 50:2 (Ber. 6 b); that if a person has a synagogue in his own town, and does not enter it for prayer, he is to be called an evil neighbour, and provokes exile alike upon himself and his children, as it is written in Jeremiah 12:4; while, on the other hand, the practice of early resorting to the synagogue would account for the longevity of people (Ber. 8 a).

Putting aside these extravagances, there cannot, however, be doubt that, long before the Talmudical period, the institution of synagogues had spread, not only among the Palestinian, but among the Jews of the dispersion, and that it was felt a growing necessity, alike from internal and external causes.

Readers of the New Testament know, that at the time of our Lord synagogues were dotted all over

the land; that in them "from of old" Moses had been read (Acts 15:21); that they were under the rule of certain authorities, who also exercised discipline; that the services were definitely regulated, although considerable liberty obtained, and that part of them consisted in reading the prophets, which was generally followed by an "exhortation" (Acts 13:15) or an address (Luke 4:17).

The word "synagogue" is, of course, of Greek derivation, and means "gathering together"--for religious purposes. The corresponding Rabbinical terms, "chenisah," "cheneseth," etc., "zibbur," "vaad," and "kahal," may be generally characterised as equivalents. But it is interesting to notice, that both the Old Testament and the Rabbis have shades of distinction, well known in modern theological discussions. To begin with the former. Two terms are used for Israel as a congregation: "edah" and "kahal"; of which the former seems to refer to Israel chiefly in their outward organisation as a congregation--what moderns would call the visible Church--while "kahal" rather indicates their inner or spiritual connection.

Even the LXX seem to have seen this distinction. The word "edah" occurs one hundred and thirty times, and is always rendered in the LXX by "synagogue," never by "ecclesia" (church); while "kahal" is translated in seventy places by "ecclesia," and only in thirty-seven by "synagogue." Similarly, the Mishnah employs the term "kahal" only to denote Israel as a whole; while the term "zibbur," for example, is used alike for churches and for the Church--that is, for individual congregations, and for Israel as a whole.

The origin of the synagogue is lost in the obscurity of tradition. Of course, like so many other institutions, it is traced by the Rabbis to the patriarchs. Thus, both the Targum Jonathan and the Jerusalem Targum represent Jacob as an attendant in the synagogue, and Rebekah as resorting thither for advice when feeling within her the unnatural contest of her two sons. There can be no occasion for seriously discussing such statements. For when in 2 Kings 22:8 we read that "the book of the law" was discovered by Shaphan

the scribe in "the house of the Lord," this implies that during the reign of King Josiah there could have been no synagogues in the land, since it was their main object to secure the weekly reading, and of course the preservation, of the books of Moses (Acts 15:21).

Our Authorised Version, indeed, renders Psalm 74:8, "They have burned up all the synagogues of God in the land." But there is good authority for questioning this translation; and, even if admitted, it would not settle the question of the exact time when synagogues originated. On the other hand, there is not a hint of synagogue-worship either in the law or the prophets; and this of itself would be decisive, considering the importance of the subject. Besides, it may be said that there was no room for such meetings under the Old Testament dispensation. There the whole worship was typical--the sacrificial services alike constituting the manner in which Israel approached unto God, and being the way by which He communicated blessings to His people.

Gatherings for prayer and for fellowship with the Father belong, so far as the Church as a whole is concerned, to the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. It is quite in accordance with this general principle, that when men filled with the Spirit of God were raised up from time to time, those who longed for deeper knowledge and closer converse with the Lord should have gathered around them on Sabbaths and new moons, as the pious Shunammite resorted to Elisha (2 Kings 4:23), and as others were no doubt wont to do, if within reach of "prophets" or their disciples. But quite a different state of matter ensued during the Babylonish captivity.

Deprived of the Temple services, some kind of religious meetings would become an absolute necessity, if the people were not to lapse into practical heathenism--a danger, indeed, which, despite the admonitions of the prophets, and the prospect of deliverance held out, was not quite avoided. For the preservation, also, of the national bond which connected Israel, as well as for their continued religious existence, the institution of synagogues seemed alike needful and desirable. In point of fact, the attentive reader of the books of

Ezra and Nehemiah will discover in the period after the return from Babylon the beginnings of the synagogue.

Only quite rudimentary as yet, and chiefly for the purposes of instructing those who had come back ignorant and semi-heathenish--still, they formed a starting-point. Then came the time of terrible Syrian oppression and persecutions, and of the Maccabean rising. We can understand, how under such circumstances the institution of the synagogue would develop, and gradually assume the proportions and the meaning which it afterwards attained. For it must be borne in mind, that, in proportion as the spiritual import of the Temple services was lost to view, and Judaism became a matter of outward ordinances, nice distinctions, and logical discussion, the synagogue would grow in importance.

And so it came to pass, that at the time of Christ there was not a foreign settlement of Jews without one or more synagogues--that of Alexandria, of which both the Talmuds speak in such exaggerated language, being specially gorgeous--while throughout Palestine they were thickly planted. It is to these latter only that we can for the present direct attention.

Not a town, nor a village, if it numbered only ten men, who could or would wholly give themselves to divine things, but had one or more synagogues.

If it be asked, why the number ten was thus fixed upon as the smallest that could form a congregation, the reply is that, according to Numbers 14:27, the "evil congregation" consisted of the spies who had brought a bad report, and whose number was ten--after deducting, of course, Joshua and Caleb. Larger cities had several, some of them many, synagogues. From Acts 6:9 we know that such was the case in Jerusalem, tradition having also left us an account of the synagogue of "the Alexandrians," to which class of Jews Stephen may have belonged by birth or education, on which ground also he would chiefly address himself to them.

The Rabbis have it that, at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, that city had not fewer than 480, or at least 460, synagogues. Unless the number 480 was fixed upon simply as the multiple

of symbolical numbers (4 x 10 x 12), or with a kindred mystical purpose in view, it would, of course, be a gross exaggeration. But, as a stranger entered a town or village, it could never be difficult to find out the synagogue. If it had not, like our churches, its spire, pointing men, as it were, heavenward, the highest ground in the place was at least selected for it, to symbolise that its engagements overtopped all things else, and in remembrance of the prophetic saying, that the Lord's house should "be established in the top of the mountains," and "exalted above the hills" (Isa 2:2).

If such a situation could not be secured, it was sought to place it "in the corners of streets," or at the entrance to the chief squares, according to what was regarded as a significant direction in Proverbs 1:21. Possibly our Lord may have had this also in view when He spoke of those who loved "to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets" (Matt 6:5), it being a very common practice at the time to offer prayer on entering a synagogue. But if no prominent site could be obtained, a pole should at least be attached to the roof, to reach up beyond the highest house. A city whose synagogue was lower than the other dwellings was regarded as in danger of destruction.

Of the architecture of ordinary synagogues, not only the oldest still in existence, but the recent excavations in Palestine, enable us to form a correct idea. Internally they were simply rectangular or round buildings, with a single or double colonnade, and more or less adorned by carvings. Externally they had generally some sacred symbol carved on the lintels--commonly the seven-branched candlestick, or perhaps the pot of manna.⁶

⁶ "Of the tabernacle in which the ark rested at Shiloh, from the time of Joshua to that of Samuel, no trace, of course, remains. But on the summit of a little knoll we find the remains of what was once a Jewish synagogue, afterwards used as a church, and subsequently as a mosque. On the lintel over the doorway, between two wreaths of flowers, is carved a vessel, shaped like a Roman amphora. It so closely resembles the conventional type of the 'pot of manna,' as found on coins and in the ruins of the synagogue at Capernaum, that it doubtless formed part of the original building. It is a not improbable

There is one remarkable instance of the use of the latter emblem, too important to be passed over. In Capernaum, our Lord's "own city" (Matt 9:1), there was but one synagogue--that built at the cost of the pious centurion. For, although our Authorised Version renders the commendation of the Jewish elders, "He loveth our nation, and has built us a synagogue" (Luke 7:5), in the original the article is definite: "he hath built us the synagogue"--just as in a similar manner we infer that Nazareth had only one synagogue (Matt 13:54).

The site of the ancient Capernaum had till comparatively recently been unknown. But its identification with the modern Tell Hum is now so satisfactory, that few would care to question it. What is even more interesting, the very ruins of that synagogue which the good centurion built have been brought to light; and, as if to make doubt impossible, its architecture is evidently that of the Herodian period. And here comes in the incidental but complete confirmation of the gospel narrative. We remember how, before, the Lord Jesus had by His word of blessing multiplied the scanty provision, brought, it might be accidentally, by a lad in the company of those five thousand who had thronged to hear Him, so that there was not only sufficient for their wants, but enough for each of the twelve apostles to fill his basket with the fragments of what the Savior had dispensed.

That day of miraculous provision had been followed by a night of equally wondrous deliverance. His disciples were crossing the lake, now tossed by one of those sudden storms which so frequently sweep down upon it from the mountains. All at once, in their perplexity, it was the Master Whom they saw, walking on the sea, and nearing the ship. As the light of the moon fell upon that well-known form, and, as He drew nigh, cast His shadow in increasing proportions upon the waters which, obedient, bore His feet, they feared. It was a marvelous vision--too marvelous almost to believe it a reality, and too awful to bear

conjecture that the synagogue may have been erected on the sacred spot which for so many generations formed the centre of Jewish worship."--Those Holy Fields.

it, if a reality. And so they seem to have hesitated about receiving Him into the ship.

But His presence and voice soon reassured them, and "immediately the ship was at the land." That "land" was the seashore of Capernaum. The next morning broke with the usual calm and beauty of spring on the lake. Presently white sails were spreading over its tranquil waters; marking the approach of many from the other side, who, missing "the Prophet," Whom, with the characteristic enthusiasm of the inhabitants of that district, they would fain have made a king, now followed Him across the water.

There could be no difficulty in "finding Him" in "His own city," the home of Peter and Andrew (Mark 1:21,29). But no ordinary dwelling would have held such a concourse as now thronged around Him. So, we imagine, the multitude made their way towards the synagogue. On the road, we suppose, the question and answers passed, of which we have an account in John 6:25-28. They had now reached the entrance to the synagogue; and the following discourse was pronounced by the Lord in the synagogue itself, as we are expressly told in verse 59: "These things said He in the synagogue, as He taught in Capernaum." But what is so remarkable is, that the very lintel of this synagogue has been found, and that the device upon it bears such close reference to the question which the Jews put to Jesus, that we can almost imagine them pointing up to it, as they entered the synagogue, and said: "Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat" (John 6:31).

For, in the words of Canon Williams, "The lintel lying among the ruins of the good centurion's synagogue at Capernaum has carved on it the device of the pot of manna. What is further remarkable, this lintel is ornamented besides with a flowing pattern of vine leaves and clusters of grapes, and another emblem of the mystery of which our Lord discoursed so largely in this synagogue."

Before parting from this most interesting subject, we may place beside the Master, as it were, the two representatives of His Church, a Gentile and a Jew, both connected with this synagogue. Of its

builder, the good centurion, Canon Williams thus writes: "In what spirit the large-hearted Roman soldier had made his offering, the rich and elaborate carvings of cornices and entablatures, of columns and capitals, and niches, still attest." As for the ruler of that same synagogue, we know that it was Jairus, whose cry of anguish and of faith brought Jesus to his house to speak the life-giving "Talitha cumi" over the one only daughter, just bursting into womanhood, who lay dead in that chamber, while the crowd outside and the hired minstrels made shrill, discordant mourning.

Thus far as to the external appearance of synagogues. Their internal arrangement appears to have been originally upon the plan of the Temple, or, perhaps, even of the Tabernacle. At least, the oldest still standing synagogue, that of the Cyrenian Jews, in the island of Gerbe, is, according to the description of a missionary, Dr. Ewald, tripartite, after the model of the Court, the Holy, and the Most Holy Place.

And in all synagogues the body of the building, with the space around, set apart for women, represents the Court of the Women, while the innermost and highest place, with the Ark behind, containing the rolls of the law, represents the sanctuary itself. In turn the synagogue seems to have been adopted as the model for the earliest Christian churches. Hence not only the structure of the "basilica," but the very term "bema," is incorporated in Rabbinical language. This is only what might have been expected, considering that the earliest Christians were Jews by nationality, and that heathenism could offer no type for Christian worship. To return.

As concerned the worshippers, it was deemed wrong to pray behind a synagogue without turning the face to it; and a story is told (Ber. 6 b) of Elijah appearing in the form of an Arab merchant, and punishing one guilty of this sin. "Thou standest before thy Master as if there were two Powers [or Gods]," said the seeming Arab; and with these words "he drew his sword and killed him." A still more curious idea prevailed, that it was requisite to advance the length of at least "two doors" within a synagogue before settling to

prayer, which was justified by a reference to Proverbs 8:34 (Ber. 8 a).

The inference is peculiar, but not more so, perhaps, than those of some modern critics, and certainly not more strange than that of the Talmud itself, which, on a preceding page, when discussing the precise duration of the wrath of the Almighty, concludes that Balaam had been the only person who knew it exactly, since it is written of him (Num 24:16), that he "knew the thoughts of the Most High!" Another direction of the Talmud was to leave the synagogue with slow steps, but to hasten to it as rapidly as possible, since it was written (Hosea 6:3, as the Rabbis arranged the verse), "Let us pursue to know the Lord."

Rabbi Seira tells us how, at one time, he had been scandalized by seeing the Rabbis running on the Sabbath--when bodily rest was enjoined--to attend a sermon; but that, when he understood how Hosea 11:10 applied to the teaching of the Halakhah, he himself joined in their race. And so Rabbi Seira, as it seems to us, somewhat caustically concludes: "The reward of a discourse is the haste" with which people run to it--no matter, it would appear, whether they get in to hear it, or whether there is anything in the discourse worth the hearing.

As a rule, synagogues were built at the expense of the congregation, though perhaps assisted by richer neighbours. Sometimes, as we know, they were erected at the cost of private individuals, which was supposed to involve special merit. In other cases, more particularly when the number of Jews was small, a large room in a private house was set apart for the purpose. This also passed into the early Church, as we gather from Acts 2:46, 5:42. Accordingly we understand the apostolic expression, "Church in the house" (Rom 16:3,5; 1 Cor 16:19; Col 4:15; Phile 2), as implying that in all these and other instances a room in a private house had been set apart, in which the Christians regularly assembled for their worship.

Synagogues were consecrated by prayer, although, even thus, the ceremony was not deemed completed till after the ordinary prayers had been offered by some one, though it were a passing stranger. Rules of decorum, analogous to those

enforced in the Temple, were enjoined on those who attended the synagogue. Decency and cleanliness in dress, quietness and reverence in demeanour, are prescribed with almost wearisome details and distinctions. Money collections were only to be made for the poor or for the redemption of captives.

If the building were in a dangerous condition, the synagogue might be broken down, provided another were built as rapidly as possible in its place. But even so, the sanctity of their place remained, and synagogue-ruins might not be converted into mourning places, nor used as thoroughfares, nor might ropes be hung up in them, nor nets spread, nor fruits laid out for drying. The principle of sanctity applied, of course, to all analogous uses to which such ruins might have been put. Money collected for building a synagogue might, if absolute necessity arose, be employed by the congregation for other purposes; but if stones, beams, etc., had been purchased for the building, these could not be resold, but were regarded as dedicated.

A town synagogue was considered absolutely inalienable; those in villages might be disposed of under the direction of the local Sanhedrim, provided the locale were not afterwards to be used as a public bath, a wash-house, a tannery, or a pool. The money realised was to be devoted to something more sacred than the mere stone and mortar of a synagogue--say, the ark in which the copies of the law were kept. Different from synagogues, though devoted to kindred purposes, were the so-called "oratories" or "places where prayer was wont to be made" (Acts 16:13). These were generally placed outside towns and in the vicinity of running water or of the sea (Josephus, Ant. xiv, 256-258), for the purpose of the customary lustrations connected with prayer (Philo ii. 535).

The separation of the sexes, which was observed even in the Temple at the time of Christ, was strictly carried out in the synagogues, such division being made effectual by a partition, boarded off and provided with gratings, to which there was separate access. The practice seems simply in accordance with Eastern manners and

modes of thinking. But the Rabbis, who seek Scripture authority for every arrangement, however trivial, find in this case their warrant in Zechariah 12:11-14, where "the wives" are no less than five times spoken of as "apart," while engaged in their prayerful mourning.

The synagogue was so placed that, on entering it, the worshippers would face towards Jerusalem--mere "orientation," as it is now called, having no meaning in Jewish worship. Beyond the middle of the synagogue rose the platform or "bima," as it was anciently, or "almmeor," as it is presently named. Those who were called up to it for reading ascended by the side nearest, and descended by that most remote from their seats in the synagogue. On this "bima" stood the pulpit, or rather lectern, the "migdal ez," "wooden tower" of Nehemiah 8:4, whence the prescribed portions of the law and of the prophets were read, and addresses delivered. The reader stood; the preacher sat.

Thus we find (Luke 4:20) that, after reading a portion from the prophet Isaiah, our Lord "closed the book, and He gave it again to the minister, and sat down," before delivering His discourse in the synagogue of Nazareth. Prayer also was offered standing, although in the Temple the worshippers prostrated themselves, a practice still continued in certain of the most solemn litanies. The pulpit or lectern--"migdal" (tower), "chisse" and "churseja" (chair or throne), or "pergulah" (the Latin "pergula," probably elevation)--stood in the middle of the "bima," and in front of "the ark."

The latter, which occupied the innermost place in the synagogue, as already noticed, corresponded to the Most Holy Place in the Temple, and formed the most important part. It was called the "aron" (ark), the "tevah," or "tevutha" (chest, like that in which Noah and Moses were saved), or the "hechal" (little temple). In reality, it consisted of a press or chest, in which the rolls of the law were deposited. This "ark" was made movable (Taan. ii. 1,2), so as to lift out on occasions of public fasting and prayer, in order to have it placed in the street or market-place where the people gathered.

Sometimes there was also a second press for the rolls of the prophets, in which the disused or damaged rolls of the law were likewise deposited.

In front of the ark hung the "vilon" ("velum," veil), in imitation of that before the Holy Place. Above it was suspended the "ner olam," or ever-burning lamp, and near to it stood the eight-branched candlestick, lit during the eight days of the feast of the dedication of the Temple (John 10:22), or Candlemas. The practice of lighting candles and lamps, not merely for use, but in honour of the day or feast, is not unknown in the synagogues.

Of course, in regard to this, as to other practices, it is impossible to determine what was the exact custom at the time of our Lord, although the reader may be able to infer how much and what special practices may have been gradually introduced. It would lead beyond our present scope to describe the various directions to be observed in copying out the synagogue-rolls, which embodied the five books of Moses, or to detail what would render them unfit for use.

No less than twenty such causes are mentioned by the Rabbis. At present the vellum, on which the Pentateuch is written, is affixed to two rollers, and as each portion of the law is read it is unrolled from the right, and rolled on to the left roller. The roll itself was fastened together by linen wrappers or cloths ("mitpachoth"), and then placed in a "case" ("tik," the Greek "theke"). All these articles are already mentioned in the Mishnah.

Later practices need not here occupy our attention. Lastly, it should be noted, that at first the people probably stood in the synagogues or sat on the ground. But as the services became more protracted, sitting accommodation had to be provided. The congregation sat facing the ark. On the other hand, "the rulers of the synagogue," Rabbis, distinguished Pharisees, and others, who sought honour of men, claimed "the chief seats," which were placed with their backs to the ark, and facing the worshippers.

These seats, which bear the same name as in the New Testament, were made objects of special ambition (Matt 23:6), and rank, dignity, or seniority entitled a Rabbi or other influential man to priority. Our Lord expressly refers to this (Matt 23:6) as one of the characteristic manifestations of Pharisaical pride. That both the same spirit and

practice had crept into some of the early churches, appears from the warning of St. James (James 2:2,3) against an un-Christ-like "respect of persons," which would assign a place high up in "synagogues" of Christians to the mere possession of "goodly apparel" or the wearing of the "gold ring."

Hitherto we have chiefly described the outward arrangements of the synagogues. It will now be necessary, however rapidly in this place, to sketch their various uses, their worship, and their officials, most of which are also referred to in various parts of the New Testament.

The Worship of the Synagogue

One of the most difficult questions in Jewish history is that connected with the existence of a synagogue within the Temple. That such a "synagogue" existed, and that its meeting-place was in "the hall of hewn stones," at the south-eastern angle of the court of the priest, cannot be called in question, in face of the clear testimony of contemporary witnesses. Considering that "the hall of hewn stones" was also the meeting-place for the great Sanhedrim, and that not only legal decisions, but lectures and theological discussions formed part of their occupation, we might be tempted to conjecture that the term "synagogue" had been employed in its wider sense, since such buildings were generally used throughout the country for this two-fold purpose as well as for worship.

Of theological lectures and discussions in the Temple, we have an instance on the occasion when our Lord was found by His parents "sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions" (Luke 2:46). And it can scarcely be doubted, that this also explains how the scribes and Pharisees could so frequently "come upon Him," while He taught in the Temple, with their difficult and entangling questions, up to that rejoinder about the nature of the Messiah, with which He finally silenced them: "If David then call Him Lord, how is He his Son?" (Matt 22:45).

But in reference to the so-called "Temple-synagogue," there is this difficulty, that certain prayers and rites seem to have been connected with it, which formed no part of the regular

Temple services, and yet were somehow engrafted upon them. We can therefore only conclude that the growing change in the theological views of Israel, before and about the time of Christ, made the Temple services alone appear insufficient. The symbolical and typical elements which constituted the life and centre of Temple worship had lost their spiritual meaning and attraction to the majority of that generation, and their place was becoming occupied by so-called teaching and outward performances. Thus the worship of the letter took the place of that of the spirit, and Israel was preparing to reject Christ for Pharisaism.

The synagogue was substituted for the Temple, and overshadowed it, even within its walls, by an incongruous mixture of man-devised worship with the God-ordained typical rites of the sanctuary. Thus, so far from the "Temple-synagogue" being the model for those throughout the country, as some writers maintain, it seems to us of later origin, and to have borrowed many rites from the country synagogues, in which the people had become accustomed to them.

The subject has a far deeper than merely historical interest. For the presence of a synagogue within the Temple, or rather, as we prefer to put it, the addition of synagogue-worship to that of the Temple, is sadly symbolical. It is, so to speak, one of those terribly significant utterances (by deed), in which Israel, all unconsciously, pronounced its own doom, just as was this: "His blood be upon us and our children," or the cry for the release of Barabbas (the son of the father), who had been condemned "for sedition" and "murder"--no doubt in connection with a pseudo-Messianic rising against the Roman power--instead of the true Son of the Father, who would indeed have "restored the kingdom to Israel."

And yet there was nothing in the worship itself of the synagogue which could have prevented either the Lord, or His apostles and early followers, from attending it till the time of final separation had come. Readers of the New Testament know what precious opportunities it offered for making known the Gospel. Its services were, indeed, singularly elastic. For the main object of the synagogue was the teaching of the people. The

very idea of its institution, before and at the time of Ezra, explains and conveys this, and it is confirmed by the testimony of Josephus (Ag. Apion, ii, 157-172).

But perhaps the ordinary reader of the New Testament may have failed to notice, how prominently this element in the synagogue is brought out in the gospel history. Yet the word "teaching" is used so frequently in connection with our Lord's appearance in the synagogue, that its lesson is obvious (see Matt 4:23; Mark 1:21, 6:2; Luke 4:15, 6:6, 13:10; John 6:59, 18:20). The "teaching" part of the service consisted mainly in reading a section from the law, with which the reading of a portion from the prophets, and a sermon, or address, were conjoined. Of course, the liturgical element could in such services never have been quite wanting, and it soon acquired considerable importance. It consisted of prayer and the pronouncing of the Aaronic blessing (Num 6:24-26) by priests--that is, of course, not by Rabbis, who were merely teachers or doctors, but by lineal descendants of the house of Aaron. There was no service of "praise" in the synagogues.

Public worship ⁷ commenced on ordinary occasions with the so-called "Shema," which was preceded in the morning and evening by two "benedictions," and succeeded in the morning by one, and in the evening by two, benedictions; the second being, strictly speaking, an evening prayer.

The "Shema" was a kind of "belief," or "creed," composed of these three passages of Scripture: Deuteronomy 6:4-9, 11:13-21; Numbers 15:37-41.

It obtained its name from the initial word "shema": "Hear, O Israel," in Deuteronomy 6:4. From the Mishnah (Ber. 1. 3) we learn, that this part of the service existed already before the time of our Lord; and we are told (Ber. iii. 3), that all males were bound to repeat this belief twice every day; children and slaves, as well as women, being exempted from the obligation. There can be no reasonable doubt on the subject, as the Mishnah

⁷ Our description here applies to the worship of the ancient, not of the modern synagogue; and we have thought it best to confine ourselves to the testimony of the Mishnah, so as to avoid the danger of bringing in practices of a later date.

expressly mentions the three Scriptural sections of the "Shema," the number of benedictions before and after it, and even the initial words of the closing benediction (Ber. ii. 2, i. 4; Tamid, v. 1). We have, therefore, here certain prayers which our Lord Himself had not only heard, but in which He must have shared--to what extent will appear in the sequel.

These prayers still exist in the synagogue, although with later additions, which, happily, it is not difficult to eliminate. Before transcribing them, it may be quoted as a mark of the value attached to them, that it was lawful to say this and the other daily prayers--to which we shall hereafter refer--and the "grace at meat," not only in the Hebrew, but in any other language, in order to secure a general understanding of the service (Sotah, vii. 1). At the same time, expressions are used which lead us to suppose that, while the liturgical formulae connected with the "Shema" were fixed, there were local variations, in the way of lengthening or shortening (Ber. i. 4). The following are the "benedictions" before the "Shema," in their original form:

1. "Blessed be Thou, O Lord, King of the world, Who formest the light and createst the darkness, Who makest peace and createst everything; Who, in mercy, givest light to the earth and to those who dwell upon it, and in Thy goodness day by day and every day renewest the works of creation. Blessed be the Lord our God for the glory of His handiwork and for the light-giving lights which He has made for His praise. Selah! Blessed be the Lord our God, Who hath formed the lights." ⁸
2. "With great love hast Thou loved us, O Lord our God, and with much overflowing pity hast Thou pitied us, our Father and our King. For the sake of our fathers who trusted in Thee, and Thou taughtest them the statutes of life, have mercy upon us and teach us. Enlighten our eyes in Thy law; cause our hearts to cleave to Thy commandments; unite our hearts to love and fear

⁸ This "benediction," while acknowledging the Creator, has such frequent reference to God in connection with the "lights," that it reads like a confession of Israel against the idolatries of Babylon. This circumstance may help to fix the time of its origination.

Thy name, and we shall not be put to shame, world without end. For Thou art a God Who preparest salvation, and us hast Thou chosen from among all nations and tongues, and hast in truth brought us near to Thy great Name--Selah--that we may lovingly praise Thee and Thy Oneness. Blessed be the Lord Who in love chose His people Israel."

After this followed the "Shema." The Mishnah gives the following beautiful explanation of the order in which the portions of Scripture of which it is composed are arranged (Ber. ii. 2). The section Deuteronomy 6:4-9 is said to precede that in 11:13-21, so that we might "take upon ourselves the yoke of the kingdom of heaven, and only after that the yoke of the commandments." Again: Deuteronomy 11:13-21 precedes Numbers 15:37-41, because the former applies, as it were, both night and day; the latter only by day.

The reader cannot fail to observe the light cast by the teaching of the Mishnah upon the gracious invitation of our Lord: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light" (Matt 11:28-30). These words must indeed have had a special significance to those who remembered the Rabbinic lesson as to the relation between the kingdom of heaven and the commandments, and they would now understand how by coming to the Saviour they would first take upon them "the yoke of the kingdom of heaven," and then that of "the commandments," finding this "yoke easy" and the "burden light."

The prayer after the "Shema" was as follows:

"True it is, that Thou art Jehovah our God and the God of our fathers, our King and the King of our fathers, our Saviour and the Saviour of our fathers, our Creator, the Rock of our salvation, our Help and our Deliverer. Thy Name is from everlasting, and there is no God beside Thee. A new song did they that were delivered sing to Thy Name by the seashore; together did all praise and own Thee King, and say, Jehovah shall reign world without end! Blessed be the Lord Who saveth Israel!"

The anti-Sadducean views expressed in this prayer will strike the student of that period, while he will also be much impressed with its suitableness and beauty. The special prayer for the evening is of not quite so old a date as the three just quoted. But as it is referred to in the Mishnah, and is so apt and simple, we reproduce it, as follows:

"O Lord our God! cause us to lie down in peace, and raise us up again to life, O our King! Spread over us the tabernacle of Thy peace; strengthen us before Thee in Thy good counsel, and deliver us for Thy Name's sake. Be Thou for protection round about us; keep far from us the enemy, the pestilence, the sword, famine, and affliction. Keep Satan from before and from behind us, and hide us in the shadow of Thy wings, for Thou art a God Who helpeth and deliverest us; and Thou, O God, art a gracious and merciful King. Keep Thou our going out and our coming in, for life and for peace, from henceforth and for ever!" (To this prayer a further addition was made at a later period.)

The "Shema" and its accompanying "benedictions" seem to have been said in the synagogue at the lectern; whereas for the next series of prayers the leader of the devotions went forward and stood before "the ark." Hence the expression, "to go up before the ark," for leading in prayer. This difference in position seems implied in many passages of the Mishnah (specially Megillah, iv.), which makes a distinction between saying the "Shema" and "going up before the ark."

The prayers offered before the ark consisted of the so-called eighteen eulogies, or benedictions, and formed the "tephillah," or supplication, in the strictest sense of the term. These eighteen, or rather, as they are now, nineteen, eulogies are of various dates--the earliest being the first three and the last three. There can be no reasonable doubt that these were said at worship in the synagogues, when our Lord was present. Next in date are eulogies 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, and 16. Eulogy 7, which in its present position seems somewhat incongruous, dates from a period of great national calamity--perhaps the time of Pompey. The other eulogies, and some insertions in the older benedictions, were added after the fall of the Jewish

commonwealth--eulogy 12 especially being intended against the early Jewish converts to Christianity.

In all likelihood it had been the practice originally to insert prayers of private composition between the (present) first three and last three eulogies; and out of these the later eulogies were gradually formulated. At any rate, we know that on Sabbaths and on other festive occasions only the first three and the last three eulogies were repeated, other petitions being inserted between them. There was thus room for the endless repetitions and "long prayers" which the Saviour condemned (Mark 12:40; Luke 20:47).

Besides, it must be borne in mind that, both on entering and leaving the synagogue, it was customary to offer prayer, and that it was a current Rabbinical saying, "Prolix prayer prolongeth life." But as we are sure that, on the Sabbaths when Our Lord attended the synagogues at Nazareth and Capernaum, the first three and the last three of the eulogies were repeated, we produce them here, as follows:

1. "Blessed be the Lord our God and the God of our fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; the great, the mighty, and the terrible God; the Most High God, Who showeth mercy and kindness, Who createth all things, Who remembereth the gracious promises to the fathers, and bringeth a Saviour to their children's children, for His own Name's sake, in love. O King, Helper, Saviour, and Shield! Blessed art Thou, O Jehovah, the Shield of Abraham."
2. "Thou, O Lord, art mighty for ever; Thou, Who quickenest the dead, art mighty to save. In Thy mercy Thou preservest the living; Thou quickenest the dead; in Thine abundant pity Thou bearest up those who fall, and healest those who are diseased, and loosest those who are bound, and fulfillst Thy faithful word to those who sleep in the dust. Who is like unto Thee, Lord of strength, and who can be compared to Thee, Who killest and makest alive, and causest salvation to spring forth? And faithful art Thou to give life unto the dead.

Blessed be Thou, Jehovah, Who quickenest the dead!"

3. "Thou art holy, and Thy Name is holy; and the holy ones praise Thee every day. Selah! Blessed art Thou, Jehovah God, the Holy One!"

It is impossible not to feel the solemnity of these prayers. They breathe the deepest hopes of Israel in simple, Scriptural language. But who can fully realise their sacred import as uttered not only in the Presence, but by the very lips of the Lord Jesus Christ, Who Himself was their answer?

The three concluding eulogies were as follows:

"Take gracious pleasure, O Jehovah our God, in Thy people Israel, and in their prayers. Accept the burnt-offerings of Israel, and their prayers, with thy good pleasure; and may the services of Thy people Israel be ever acceptable unto Thee. And oh that our eyes may see it, as Thou turnest in mercy to Zion! Blessed be Thou, O Jehovah, Who restoreth His Shechinah to Zion!"

"We praise Thee, because Thou art Jehovah our God, and the God of our fathers, for ever and ever. Thou art the Rock of our life, the Shield of our salvation, from generation to generation. We laud Thee, and declare Thy praise for our lives which are kept within Thine hand, and for our souls which are committed unto Thee, and for Thy wonders which are with us every day, and Thy wondrous deeds and Thy goodnesses, which are at all seasons--evening, morning, and mid-day. Thou gracious One, Whose compassions never end; Thou pitying One, Whose grace never ceaseth--for ever do we put our trust in Thee! And for all this Thy Name, O our King, be blessed and extolled always, for ever and ever! And all living bless Thee--Selah--and praise Thy Name in truth, O God, our Salvation and our Help. Blessed art Thou, Jehovah; Thy Name is the gracious One, to Whom praise is due."

(We give this eulogy in its shorter form, as it is at present used in evening prayer.) "Oh bestow on Thy people Israel great peace, for ever; for Thou art King and Lord of all peace, and it is good in Thine eyes to bless Thy people Israel with praise at all times and in every hour.

Blessed art Thou, Jehovah, Who blesseth His people Israel with peace."

Another act, hitherto, so far as we know, unnoticed, requires here to be mentioned. It invests the prayers just quoted with a new and almost unparalleled interest. According to the Mishnah (Megillah, iv. 5), the person who read in the synagogue the portion from the prophets was also expected to say the "Shema," and to offer the prayers which have just been quoted. It follows that, in all likelihood, our Lord Himself had led the devotions in the synagogue of Capernaum on that Sabbath when He read the portion from the prophecies of Isaiah which was that day "fulfilled in their hearing" (Luke 4:16-21). Nor is it possible to withstand the impression, how specially suitable to the occasion would have been the words of these prayers, particularly those of eulogies 2 and 17.

The prayers were conducted or repeated aloud by one individual, specially deputed for the occasion, the congregation responding by an "Amen." The liturgical service concluded with the priestly benediction (Num 6:23,24), spoken by the descendants of Aaron. In case none such were present, "the legate of the Church," as the leader of the devotions was called, repeated the words from the Scriptures in their connection. In giving the benediction, the priests elevated their hands up to the shoulders (Sotah, vii. 6); in the Temple, up to the forehead. Hence this rite is designated by the expression, "the lifting up of the hands."⁹

According to the present practice, the fingers of the two hands are so joined together and separated as to form five interstices; and a mystic meaning attaches to this. It was a later superstition to forbid looking at the priests' hands, as involving physical danger. But the Mishnah already directs that priests having blemishes on their hands, or their fingers dyed, were not to pronounce the benediction,

⁹ The apostle may have had this in his mind when, in directing the order of public ministration, he spoke of "the men...lifting up holy hands, without wrath or doubting" (1 Tim 2:8). At any rate, the expression is precisely the same as that used by the Rabbis.

lest the attention of the people should be attracted. Of the attitude to be observed in prayer, this is perhaps scarcely the place to speak in detail. Suffice it, that the body was to be fully bent, yet so, that care was taken never to make it appear as if the service had been burdensome.

One of the Rabbis tells us, that, with this object in view, he bent down as does a branch; while, in lifting himself up again, he did it like a serpent--beginning with the head! Any one deputed by the rulers of a congregation might say prayers, except a minor. This, however, applies only to the "Shema." The eulogies or "tephillah" proper, as well as the priestly benediction, could not be pronounced by those who were not properly clothed, nor by those who were so blind as not to be able to discern daylight. If any one introduced into the prayers heretical views, or what were regarded as such, he was immediately stopped; and, if any impropriety had been committed, was put under the ban for a week.

One of the most interesting and difficult questions relates to certain modes of dress and appearance, and certain expressions used in prayer, which the Mishnah (Megillah, iv. 8,9) declares either to mark heresy or to indicate that a man was not to be allowed to lead prayers in the synagogue. It may be, that some of these statements refer not only to certain Jewish "heretics," but also to the early Jewish Christians. If so, they may indicate certain peculiarities with which they were popularly credited.

Of the services hitherto noticed, the most important were the repetition of the eulogies and the priestly benediction. What now followed was regarded as quite as solemn, if, indeed, not more so. It has already been pointed out, that the main object of the synagogue was the teaching of the people. This was specially accomplished by the reading of the law. At present the Pentateuch is for this purpose arranged into fifty-four sections, of which one is read on each successive Sabbath of the year, beginning immediately after the feast of Tabernacles. But anciently the lectionary, at least in Palestine, seems to have been differently arranged, and the Pentateuch so divided that its reading occupied three, or, according to some,

three and a-half years (half a Jubilee-period). The section for the day was subdivided, so that every Sabbath at least seven persons were called up to read, each a portion, which was to consist of not less than three verses.

The first reader began, and the last closed, with a benediction. As the Hebrew had given place to the Aramaic, a "meturgeman," or interpreter, stood by the side of the reader, and translated verse by verse into the vernacular. It was customary to have service in the synagogues, not only on Sabbaths and feast-days, but also on the second and fifth days of the week (Monday and Thursday), when the country-people came to market, and when the local Sanhedrim also sat for the adjudication of minor causes.

At such week-day services only three persons were called up to read in the law; on new moon's day and on the intermediate days of a festive week, four; on festive days--when a section from the prophets was also read--five; and on the day of atonement, six. Even a minor was allowed to read, and, if qualified, to act as "meturgeman." The section describing the sin of Reuben, and that giving a second account of the sin of the golden calf, were read, but not interpreted; those recounting the priestly blessing, and, again, the sin of David and of Amnon, were neither read nor interpreted. The reading of the law was followed by a lesson from the prophets.

At present there is a regular lectionary, in which these lessons are so selected as to suit the sections from the law appointed for the day. This arrangement has been traced to the time of the Syrian persecutions, when all copies of the law were sought for and destroyed; and the Jewish authorities are supposed to have selected portions from the prophets to replace those from the law which might not be produced in public. But it is evident that, if these persecuting measures had been rigidly enforced, the sacred rolls of the prophets would not have escaped destruction any more than those of the law.

Besides, it is quite certain that such a lectionary of the prophets as that presently in use did not exist at the time of our Lord, nor even when the Mishnah was collated. Considerable liberty seems

to have been left to individuals; and the expression used by St. Luke in reference to our Lord in the synagogue at Capernaum (Luke 4:17), "And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written," most accurately describes the state of matters. For, from Megillah iv. 4, we gather that, in reading from the prophets, it was lawful to pass over one or more verses, provided there were no pause between the reading and the translation of the "meturgeman."

For here also the services of a "meturgeman" were employed; only that he did not, as in reading the law, translate verse by verse, but after every three verses. It is a remarkable fact that the Rabbis exclude from public reading the section in the prophecies of Ezekiel which describes "the chariot and wheels." Rabbi Elieser would also have excluded that in Ezekiel 16:2.

The reading of the prophets was often followed by a sermon or address, with which the service concluded. The preacher was called "darshan," and his address a "derashah" (homily, sermon, from "darash," to ask, inquire, or discuss). When the address was a learned theological discussion--especially in academies--it was not delivered to the people directly, but whispered into the ear of an "amora," or speaker, who explained to the multitude in popular language the weighty sayings which the Rabbi had briefly communicated to him.

A more popular sermon, on the other hand, was called a "meamar," literally, a "speech, or talk." These addresses would be either Rabbinical expositions of Scripture, or else doctrinal discussions, in which appeal would be made to tradition and to the authority of certain great teachers. For it was laid down as a principle (Eduj. i. 3), that "every one is bound to teach in the very language of his teacher."

In view of this two-fold fact, we can in some measure understand the deep impression which the words of our Lord produced, even on those who remained permanently uninfluenced by them. The substance of His addresses was far other than they had ever heard of, or conceived possible. It seemed as if they opened quite a new world of thought, hope, duty, and comfort. No wonder that even in contemptuous Capernaum "all bare Him

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witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth"; and that the very Temple-guard sent to make Him prisoner were overawed, and before the council could only give this account of their strange negligence: "Never man spake like this man" (John 7:46).

Similarly, the form also of His teaching was so different from the constant appeal of the Rabbis to

mere tradition; it seemed all to come so quite fresh and direct from heaven, like the living waters of the Holy Spirit, that "the people were astonished at His doctrine: for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (Matt 7:28,29).

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Lesson 204 Quiz

The following questions relate to your study of this lesson.

To answer a question, type your response in the space provided after the word "Answer:". A question may be True/False, multiple choice, fill in the blank, or short answer type.

The last question requires you to write one or two paragraphs in "essay" form. Use the space provided; it will expand to accommodate your response.

You have choices about sending the quiz back to Grace Notes.

- If you received an email file containing the quiz, you can use the REPLY feature of your e-mail application to open the quiz. Enter your answers in the reply message. Then SEND the message to Grace Notes.
- You can enter your answers on these pages, then send the whole file back to Grace Notes as a file attachment. As an alternative,
- After you answer the questions here, copy and paste the whole list of questions into a new MS Word document; then, send the new file to Grace Notes as an attachment. The new file will, of course, be much smaller than this main file.
- Finally, you can print the Quiz pages on your printer and send your response back to Grace Notes in the regular mail. If you do this, send the mail to:

Grace Notes

% Warren Doud

1705 Aggie Lane

Austin, Texas 78757 USA

Whichever transmission method you use, when Grace Notes receives your completed Quiz, the next lesson will be sent to you, by the same means you received this one. EXCEPT: when you have sent in the FINAL QUIZ, we will send your certificate to you, by regular mail.

This Quiz may have Multiple Choice, True/False, Fill-in-the-Blank, and Short Answer questions. Type your responses after the word "Answer:" following each question. The last question is an essay question and requires you to write a few sentences. Type your response following the questions.

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Lesson 204 Quiz

1. Saul was fully within his legal rights to approach the high priest with his request for credentials.

[True/False]

Answer:

2. Saul was never directly involved in putting Christians to death; he only arrested them and delivered them to Jewish authorities. [True/False]

Answer:

3. In Acts 22:5, to what does the phrase “all the estate of the elders” refer?

Answer:

4. Of what middle eastern province was Damascus the capital city?

Answer:

5. Saul was going to arrest any Christian believer he could find, male or female, Jew or Gentile.

[True/False]

Answer:

6. What Roman leaders gave permission for the Jewish Sanhedrin to have jurisdiction over Jews in the Roman province of Judea?

Answer:

7. Saul was struck down by lightning. [True/False]

Answer:

8. In what portion of the book of Daniel do we read about Daniel’s visions?

Answer:

9. Saul immediately recognized the Lord Jesus Christ as the one who was speaking to him. [True/False]

Answer:

10. The men who traveled with Saul were also blinded by the bright light. [True/False]

Answer:

11. Where was Paul taken when he was brought into Damascus?

Answer:

12. Where in the Bible do we read about David’s stationing soldiers in Damascus?

Answer:

13. The city of Damascus is in the middle of a desert, but it has always been a vibrant and prosperous city because _____.

Answer:

14. The men who were traveling with Saul became believers and joined the church at Damascus.

[True/False]

Answer:

15. The Greek word **kurie** (KURIE) means _____.

Answer:

End of Quiz
