**The Book Of Acts: Verse-by-Verse**

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**Acts 9:17-19**

As we return to the story of Saul’s Conversion, Ananias is headed toward Straight Street and Judas’ home. Let’s pick up with verse 17:

“Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”

* **Two Immediacies:**

1. Jesus: “Go!”

2. Luke: “Then Ananias went to the house …”

* **Ananias’ Approach To His Task:**

Ananias didn’t take any time to verify Saul’s conversion experience. He didn’t provide Saul a full introduction of who he was. Instead … “Placing his hands on Saul, he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”

* **The Laying On of Hands or The “Semikha”: v. 17**

“Placing his hands on Saul”: Luke isn’t casually noting that Ananias placed his hands on Saul; he’s saying something more than that.

**- Old Testament:** The “Semikha”, (“laying on of hands”) is referred to on numerous occasions. “Semikha” literally means, “the leaning of hands”. It is not a casual act. Two general uses: 1. An actual transfer of something invisible. 2. The symbolic indication of a spiritual reality.

Example: Moses ordains Joshua as his apprentice and eventual successor. Numbers 27:18: “So the LORD said to Moses, “Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay your hand on him.”

Numbers 34:9: “And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him…”

As Moses did the “Semikha”, something invisible and intangible was transmitted to Joshua: The Spirit of God and the Spirit of Wisdom.

The “Semikha” was also used to formally indicate either blessing or the transfer of authority. The Jewish elders ordained their successors in this way and their successors in turn ordained others. This chain of “Semikhah” continued through the time of the Second Temple.

**- New Testament Examples: (placing or laying on of hands)**

Jesus did this as he prayed for healing, or when he performed miracles. We also read that Jesus placed his hands upon children to impart a rabbinic blessing.

The formal acknowledgement of God’s call upon those chosen for vocational ministry. (See, I Timothy 5:22)

The “laying on of hands” associated with the movement of the Holy Spirit.

1. Philip’s foray into Samaria: The laying on of hands by Peter and John transmitted the special manifestations of the Holy Spirit to the new converts there.

2. Gentile Converts as Ephesus: Acts 19:5-6: “When Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying” -

Let’s come back to the text. Luke records, “Placing his hands on Saul, he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”

* **Brother Saul:**

Ananias could have just said, “Saul”. Instead, he says, “Brother Saul”.

“Brother” - one of the examples of family pictured in the New Testament. Greek word: “adelphos”. The prefix, “a”, denotes unity. The word, “delphus” means a woman’s womb. The word “adelphos” literally means, “from the same womb”.

As one scholar put it, “Believers are all born from one Spirit and thus have a common "birth."

Adelphos describes a fellowship that stems from a common origin.  Ananias was calling Saul a spiritual brother, a fellow Christian, and a fellow believer.

* **A Confirmatory Message:**

When Ananias says, “Brother Saul”, he uses the same Aramaic form that Jesus used in Saul’s vision. Ananias was obviously speaking to Saul in Aramaic – just as Jesus had.

Ananias gives Saul a confirmatory word from Jesus about: 1. Saul’s encounter on the Damascus Road. 2. Jesus’ calling on Saul’s life to be an apostle.

Paul’s Acts 22 defense before Agrippa: What Luke did not include: “‘The God of our fathers has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.’”- Acts 22:14-16

* **The Scales That Fell From Saul’s Eyes: vv.18-19:**

The writer of Acts: “Luke the Physician”. Verse 18: An example of Luke writing as a physician. “Something like scales” - a technical term for a disease of the eyes first coined by Hippocrates. It was used to describe “whiteness” or “white films” (soft or encrusted) that formed on the eyes.

The Book of Tobit - the story of Tobit and his family, who are living as exiles from Israel after the Assyrian conquest. When the book begins, Tobit is blind. However, Tobit 11:13 records, “… And the whiteness peeled away from the corners of his eyes; and when he saw his son, he fell upon his neck.”

Saul’s Blindness: Luke is suggesting it stemmed from the intensity of light he saw; it caused some secretion which formed over his eyes and hardened.

* **Two Supernatural Events at Judas’ Home:**

1. Saul’s is healed from his 3-day blindness.

2. The Infilling of the Spirit.

“When Ananias entered the room and laid his hands on Saul he said, “Jesus sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”

“Did Saul receive the Spirit?” The answer, undoubtedly, must be, “Yes”. But Luke doesn’t tell us that. Does Paul mention this in any of his epistles or in the Acts narrative? No.

Evidence of the infilling: A large catalogue of supernatural events in Saul’s life:

* Elymas the sorcerer, is struck with blindness: Acts 13:6-12
* Signs and wonders are done through Paul and Barnabas: Acts 14:3
* Paul heals a paralytic: Acts 14:8-10
* Paul delivers a woman from a demonic spirit: Acts 16:16-18
* God works unusual miracles through Paul: Acts 19:11-12
* Paul shakes off a poisonous snake: Acts 28:3-6
* Paul heals the father of Publius and many more: Acts 28:7-10
* Paul emphasizes the gift of glossolalia: I Corinthians 14:18

An additional clue: I Corinthians 14:18: “I am glad I speak in tongues more than all of you”. This reference further ties in with what we see several times in the Book of Acts about the Holy Spirit and the impartation of spiritual gifts.

* **Final Things: vv.18-19:**

“Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, and after taking some food, he regained his strength.”

Saul’s Acts 22 defense before Agrippa: “[Ananias said,] And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.’”- Acts 22:14-16

1. There was no waiting on baptism for Saul. He was to do it immediately.

2. Acts’ Consistency: Ananias is using the new formula that has been instituted since the Day of Pentecost. Peter’s words to the crowd: “Repent and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

From the context of the story, it make sense that Ananias baptized Saul that very day.

* **Summary:** 1. Saul’s blindness has been healed. 2. He has been filled with the Holy Spirit. 3. Ananias, welcoming Saul as a brother in Christ, baptized him.
* What happened next was a bit of roller coaster ride for Saul ….