

The Leader Ananias, Acts 9 & 22

Series: The Early Days

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May 2, 2021

Acts 9:10-19; 22:12-16

During the early days of the church there are those who make a brief appearance and then they are gone. There is a story in the OT in 2 Kings 5 about a man named Naaman, a Syrian commander who had leprosy. God used a young Jewish slave girl to direct him to the prophet Elisha where he found his healing in the muddy Jordan River by dipping seven times. Naaman walked away from this knowing there was no other God than the God of Israel. Was this the only person this little girl ever led to the Lord?

Relate Paul's conversion story, Acts 9:1-9

Ananias texts:

Acts 9:10 In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!" "Yes, Lord," he answered. 11 The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. 12 In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight." 13 "Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem. 14 And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name." 15 But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. 16 I will show him how much he must suffer for my name." 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." 18 Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, 19 and after taking some food, he regained his strength. Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus.

Acts 22: 12 "A man named Ananias came to see me. He was a devout observer of the law and highly respected by all the Jews living there. 13 He stood beside me and said, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight!' And at that very moment I was able to see him. 14 "Then he said: 'The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. 15 You will be his witness to all people of what you have seen and heard. 16 And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.'

What do we know about Ananias as a man?

- He lived in Damascus (Not the same Ananias who along with his wife Sapphira lied to the Holy Spirit and were struck dead, Acts 5). Damascus was the capital of Syria, NE of the sea of Galilee, a Gentile city with Jews living there.
- He was a disciple of Jesus, most likely a convert from Judaism.
- He was a devout observer of the law. He was no casual Bible reader. He was serious about knowing and practicing the Law of Moses, even as a disciple of Jesus the Law was important to him. Paul says of himself “as for righteousness based on law, faultless.” (Phil.3:6) Paul would have had a lot in common with Ananias.
- He was highly respected among the Jews of Damascus. It seems clear that when one converted to Jesus especially outside of Jerusalem, it did not mean that they became enemies of all Jews. (For instance in Acts 10 the Gentile Cornelius was said to be “devout and God-fearing” a man who gave to others generously. He obviously was well respected in the community. Everyone does not have to agree with us for us to have the respect of others.
- Ananias was a cautious disciple (unlike Peter who was a prejudiced disciple). He knew Paul’s reputation and his intent in coming to Damascus. He did not want to be arrested and hauled off the Jerusalem to stand trial before the Sanhedrin.
- God’s word settled everything for him. If God said it, he believed it, and he obeyed. God said “Go!” and he went. (God tells us to “Go” too.)
- Ananias had a threefold commission:
 - Heal Paul’s eyesight.
 - Baptize him
 - Tell him what the Lord was calling him to do
 - Chosen instrument to proclaim Jesus to Gentiles, kings, and Jews
 - Suffer for my name
 - To know God’s will
 - To see God’s Righteous One and to hear words from His mouth
 - To be God’s witness of what he has seen and heard

How many people did Ananias teach and baptize? How many times did God tell him to go to a certain person? What if this was the only person he ever taught and baptized? Paul went on to be the greatest and most successful evangelist of all time (GOAT).

When Ananias woke that morning he had no idea he was going to be called to participate in one of the greatest opportunities of all time. He had no clue that he would be called by God to walk into a house on Straight Street, find a humbled persecutor on his knees blind and praying, and ready to hear the word of God. He had no inclination that he would be walking down into the water with Paul to baptize him into Christ, and to set in motion the greatest period of evangelism in the history of the world.

Are you ready to tell just one person about Jesus, and to see what God does with this one encounter? Do you think Paul was eternally grateful to Ananias for saying Yes to God's call? I do.