

Acts 26:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

Analysis

But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles—Paul's geographical progression fulfills Acts 1:8 ("Jerusalem, Judaea, Samaria, uttermost part"). **Shewed** (ἀπήγγελλον, apēngellon) means "proclaimed, announced," emphasizing public declaration. Paul's message had three components: **repent** (μετανοεῖν, metanoein—"change one's mind/direction"), **turn to God** (ἐπιστρέφειν, ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν, epistrephein epi ton theon—"return, convert"), and **do works meet for repentance** (ἄξια τῆς μετανοίας ἔργα πράσσειν, axia tēs metanoias erga prassein). This echoes John the Baptist (Matthew 3:8) and James (2:17-26): genuine repentance produces visible transformation. Paul wasn't preaching bare orthodoxy but life-changing conversion.

Historical Context

Paul defends himself before Agrippa II (circa 59 AD) by summarizing 25+ years of ministry. Damascus (Acts 9:19-22), Jerusalem (Acts 9:26-29), Judea (Acts 9:32-11:18), then Gentile mission (Acts 13-20) traces his actual itinerary. This chronology answers Jewish accusations: Paul didn't abandon Judaism but fulfilled it by bringing Gentiles into covenant promises (Acts 26:6-7, 22-23).

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How do "works meet for repentance" differ from works-based salvation, and what evidence shows genuine conversion in your life?
2. Paul's ministry moved from familiar (Damascus Jews) to foreign (Gentiles)—where is God calling you beyond your comfort zone?

Interlinear Text

ἀλλὰ τοῖς ἐν Δαμασκῷ πρῶτον καὶ Ἱεροσολύμοις
But unto them of Damascus first and at Jerusalem
G235 G1722 G1154 G4412 G2532 G2414

εἰς πᾶσάν τε τὴν χώραν τῆς Ἰουδαίας καὶ τοῖς
throughout all and the coasts of Judaea and
G1519 G3956 G5037 G5561 G2449 G2532 G3588

ἔθυεσιν ἀπαγγέλλων μετανοεῖν καὶ
then to the Gentiles shewed that they should repent and
G1484 G518 G3340 G2532

ἐπιστρέφειν ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν αἵξια τῆς μετανοίας ἔργα
turn to God meet for repentance works
G1994 G1909 G2316 G514 G3588 G3341 G2041

πράσσοντας
and do
G4238

Additional Cross-References

Acts 3:19 (Repentance): Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

Matthew 3:8 (Repentance): Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:

Acts 2:38 (Repentance): Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Matthew 9:13 (Repentance): But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Revelation 2:5 (Repentance): Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

Revelation 3:3 (Repentance): Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

Acts 15:19 (References God): Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God:

Acts 20:21 (Repentance): Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

Acts 11:18 (Repentance): When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

Acts 9:15 (Parallel theme): But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: