

Acts 9:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

As Saul journeyed to Damascus, 'suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven' - divine intervention at the exact moment of God's choosing. The light's supernatural origin and intensity (brighter than noonday sun, Acts 26:13) revealed God's glory. Christ's initiative in confronting Saul demonstrates sovereign grace - the persecutor didn't seek Christ, Christ sought him. Reformed theology emphasizes irresistible grace: when God calls effectually, the sinner cannot refuse. This light represented the glory of the risen, ascended Christ appearing to His chosen apostle.

Historical Context

This occurred on the road to Damascus circa AD 34-35, becoming the watershed moment in Saul's life and Christian history. Paul later counted this as his apostolic commissioning, seeing the risen Christ as the other apostles had (1 Corinthians 9:1, 15:8).

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. What does Christ's initiative in confronting Saul teach about sovereign grace?
2. How does this sudden divine intervention demonstrate that salvation is God's work, not man's?
3. Why was it necessary for Paul to see the risen Christ to become an apostle?

Interlinear Text

ἐν	δὲ	τῷ	πορεύεσθαι	ἐγένετο	αὐτὸν	ἐγγίζειν	τῇ
G1722	And	G3588	journeyed	he came	as he	near	G3588
G1161			G4198	G1096	G846	G1448	
Δαμασκῷ	καὶ	ἐξαίφνης	περιήστραψεν	αὐτὸν	φῶς		
Damascus	and	suddenly	there shined round about	as he	a light		
G1154	G2532	G1810	G4015	G846	G5457		
ἀπὸ	τοῦ	οὐρανοῦ					
from	G3588	heaven					
G575		G3772					

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 21:23 (Light): And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

1 Corinthians 15:8 (Parallel theme): And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

Acts 22:6 (Light): 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.

1 Timothy 6:16 (Light): Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.

Acts 9:17 (Parallel theme): And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.

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