

Acts 9:30

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.

Analysis

Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus. The church's protective intervention demonstrates corporate responsibility for endangered members while illustrating God's providence in geographic repositioning for future ministry.

When the brethren knew indicates vigilant community awareness. The church monitored threats against members and acted corporately for protection. Christianity involves mutual care, not individualistic isolation. The phrase brought him down shows active intervention—not merely advising but physically escorting Saul to safety.

To Caesarea provided exit point—Mediterranean port enabling sea travel to Tarsus. The route choice suggests both urgency and strategy. Sent him forth implies purposeful commissioning, not merely fleeing danger. While immediate cause was safety, divine purpose involved preparation for future Gentile ministry centered in Tarsus region.

This withdrawal initiated Saul's 'silent years' (approximately 37-43 CE) before Barnabas recruited him for Antioch ministry (Acts 11:25-26). God uses apparent setbacks—persecution forcing departure—for kingdom purposes. Reformed theology emphasizes divine providence working through natural circumstances, even persecution, to accomplish redemptive purposes.

Historical Context

Tarsus, Saul's hometown (Acts 9:11, 21:39, 22:3), was Cilician capital and prominent university city. Returning there provided safety, family connection, and strategic location for future missionary work. Galatians 1:21 confirms Paul worked in Syria-Cilicia region during this period.

The silent years remain largely undocumented but likely involved ministry planting churches in Cilicia (Acts 15:23, 41). This period shaped Paul's theological development and missionary methodology. Persecution driving him from Jerusalem positioned him perfectly for Gentile apostleship. God used opposition to relocate His chosen vessel to optimal position for assigned task. The departure around 37 CE preceded Paul's emergence as Christianity's greatest missionary.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does church responsibility for member safety exemplify biblical community?
2. In what ways does God use persecution and apparent setbacks to position servants for future ministry?
3. What role do 'silent years' of preparation play in equipping leaders for public ministry?
4. How should believers discern between faithfully remaining in dangerous contexts versus prudently withdrawing?
5. What does corporate decision-making about Saul's safety teach about church authority and individual submission?

Interlinear Text

ἐπιγνόντες δὲ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ κατήγαγον αὐτὸν εἰς
knew Which when the brethren down him to
G1921 G1161 G3588 G80 G2609 G846 G1519

Καισάρειαν καὶ ἐξαπέστειλαν αὐτὸν εἰς Ταρσόν
Caesarea and forth him to Tarsus
G2542 G2532 G1821 G846 G1519 G5019

Additional Cross-References

Acts 9:11 (Parallel theme): And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth,

Acts 11:25 (Parallel theme): Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul:

Acts 8:40 (Parallel theme): But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.

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