



The DAILY JESUS NEWS #351
The Eternal Ministry of Jesus in Heaven
The Continuing Words and Works of the Risen Jesus in the Early Church

Jesus Sends Ananias to Reaffirm Paul's Apostolic Calling
Acts 9.10-19, 22.14-21

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10 In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, *"Ananias!"*

"Look Lord, I am here," he answered.

11 The Lord told him, *"I command you to go the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is continuing to pray. 12 He has seen a vision of a man named Ananias come, and place his hands on him to regain his sight."*

13 "Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard reports about this man from many people 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 seize all who call on your name."

15 But the Lord said to Ananias, *"I command you to get going! This man is my chosen instrument to declare my name to the Gentiles and their kings, and to the people of Israel. 16 I will reveal to him how much he must suffer for my name."*

17 Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Laying his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord has sent me to you in a decisive way, so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit. It was Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here."

(Acts 22.14-16) "The God of our fathers has personally selected you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth.

15 "You will be a witness on his behalf to all people of what you have permanently seen and heard. 16 And now what are you waiting for? Get up, receive immersion in water, and wash your sins away by calling on his name."

9.18 Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was immersed, 19 and after eating some food he was strengthened.

Jesus Spoke to Paul again later: (Acts 22.17-21)

17 "When I returned to Jerusalem and was praying at the temple, I fell into a trance 18 and saw the Lord speaking to me. *'Quick!' he said. 'I command you to leave Jerusalem immediately, because the people here will not accept your testimony about me.'*

19 "Lord," I replied, "these people know that I went from one synagogue to another to imprison and whip those who believe in you. 20 And when the blood of your martyr Stephen was poured out, I stood there in full agreement and watched over the clothes of those who were killing him."

21 “Then the Lord said to me, *I command you to get going now; for I myself will send you far away to the Gentiles.*”

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This “superscript ID” is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

CONTEXT DIGEST	
Location	Damascus, and Jerusalem
Timeline	Six Years After Jesus Ascended
Jesus' Life Context	Stage IX: The Resurrection and Eternal Ministry of Jesus
	Jesus' Eternal Ministry in Heaven
	The Continuing Words and Works of the Risen Jesus in the Early Church
Title:	Jesus Reaffirms Paul's Apostolic Calling by Sending Ananias

The continuing ministry of Jesus in heaven was showcased in the life and ministry of the apostle Paul more than any other person in the New Testament. Aside from his blinding encounter with the Risen Jesus on the road to Damascus, every other aspect of Paul's relationship with Jesus was the same as what any of us experience today. Actually, Paul had less resources than we do, for he did not receive the final revelation of the eternal words and works of Jesus that was given to John on the island of Patmos--what we know as the Book of Revelation. This came 30 years after Paul's martyrdom.

Jesus' plans for Paul's ministry caused him to involve Ananias, an otherwise unknown believer in Damascus. The confirmation and witness of this older believer was crucial to Paul's acceptance and fellowship with the church in Damascus and beyond, for Paul was the foremost persecutor of the Church at that time, and had left Jerusalem on a sanctioned mission to persecute the believers in Damascus. Paul's claim to have become a follower of Jesus would be seen by the disciples as a ruse to gain access to the flock in that city, so that he could destroy them.

A revelation from Jesus in heaven that no one could argue with was necessary in these circumstances. Jesus chose Ananias because he knew that his servant would obey his command, no matter how dangerous and risky it might seem. Ananias proved the character of his faith by receiving the revelation from Jesus in heaven and doing exactly as he was told.

In addition, Jesus desired Paul to experience the fellowship of his Church, obedience to his command for every new believer to receive immersion in water, and most importantly, to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Jesus also wanted Paul to know the ministry purpose for which Jesus had called him into faith, and the sufferings that obedience would bring to Paul. Jesus did not shrink from expecting robust commitment and faithfulness unto death from his followers, for such is the fruit of his transforming love.

Don't miss the fact that Paul began his christian life with three days of fasting and prayer. Jesus pointed out to Ananias-- ***“for he (Paul) is praying.”*** Just as Jesus began his own ministry with 40 days of prayer and fasting, Paul followed his Lord's pattern in a smaller way. This is the meaning of “Christian.” The

word literally means “a smaller Christ.” None of us can begin to match Jesus in any aspect of his infinite glory, but we ought to be a diminutive version of him--conformed to his character and consistent with his example.

Paul had a pivotal role to play in the early church, with the calling from Jesus to spearhead the transition from a primarily Jewish makeup, to one that fulfilled Jesus’ command to **“make disciples of all the nations”**--a primarily Gentile church. This was all according to the will and plan of Jesus in heaven, who continued his words and works on earth through his servant, the apostle Paul, and every member of his body on earth as well.

Our text includes a second example of Jesus leading Paul from heaven, when Paul returned to Jerusalem after his conversion at Damascus. As much as Paul wanted to witness to his brother Jews there, and see their conversion to faith in Jesus as the Messiah, this was not his primary calling. Jesus commanded Paul in no uncertain terms to leave Jerusalem and go to his appointed ministry among the Gentiles. It was Jesus in heaven who spoke to Paul on earth.

Paul treasured his personal relationship with Jesus, and the intimacy with his Lord that caused Jesus in heaven to speak and work so powerfully through his servant on earth. Some 20 years later he would say:

17 Therefore I glory in Christ Jesus in my service to God. 18 I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done — 19 by the power of signs and wonders, through the power of the Spirit of God. So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ. (Rom. 15.17-19, NIV)

Paul was passionate about Christ Jesus in heaven working in and through him on earth. For this stellar servant of Jesus, nothing else about his life was worth talking about, or mattered. It was this capacity for singular focus on love for Jesus, in response to his Lord’s unconditional prior love for him, that Jesus saw in Paul when he was still an unbeliever, and caused him to draw Paul to himself. Without question then, everything about Paul’s life and ministry on earth was an expression of the eternal ministry of the risen Jesus in heaven.

APPLICATION:

Paul is the premier example in the New Testament of how Jesus in heaven continues to speak and work in our lives here on earth through his Spirit. Jesus calls each of us to faith in him, with predetermined plans to give us spiritual gifts for ministry, the power of the gospel itself, and His Spirit as the living connection between us. Furthermore, as Paul learned so vividly, Jesus in heaven is simultaneously linked to every believer on earth through his Spirit, so we collectively make up his body in which he speaks and works as our Head.

Luke came to know Christ through Paul. So these emphases of Paul’s own special calling from Jesus were embodied in Luke’s ministry as a Gentile. His two volume set (Luke/Acts) shares this view of the eternal ministry of Jesus that came from Paul, and ultimately from Jesus himself in heaven.

What are your own gifts and calling in ministry from Jesus?

How can you more fully yield yourself to the power of the Holy Spirit so that Jesus can accomplish the good works that he has planned to accomplish through you?