

# **The Naked Bible Podcast 2.0**

**Number 45**

**“Acts 9”**

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**With**

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## Acts 9

Acts 9 marks a transition in the story of the early church – the conversion of Saul, apostle to the Gentiles. That’s the part everyone knows (and it’s important, to say the least). But there are other interesting and noteworthy things going on in the chapter: the multiple references to Damascus (why Damascus?), the vocabulary (and theology) of “holy ones,” and the matter of how “son of God” meant more than a claim to be the Davidic king.

**TS:** Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 45, Acts 9. I'm your residential layman, Trey Stricklin, and he's the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey Mike, how are you doing?

**MSH:** Pretty good. How are you Trey?

**TS:** I'm doing good. So we got Acts 9 right now I guess.

**MSH:** We do, indeed.

**TS:** Well, looking forward to it.

**MSH:** Alright. So let's just jump in with Acts chapter 9. I think we're going to do what we've been doing, just sort of working our way through the passage. When we get toward the end here, there's going to be something that's going to be a bit of a rabbit trail. I'm going to be reading a long excerpt of something, so I don't want to devote too much time to reading the whole chapter, but we'll see how it goes. So Acts 9, we get the conversion of Saul, who will become known as Paul. So let's just jump in here. We have,

But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest <sup>2</sup> and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup> Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. <sup>4</sup> And falling to the ground he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" <sup>5</sup> And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" And he said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. <sup>6</sup> But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do." <sup>7</sup> The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. <sup>8</sup> Saul rose from the ground, and although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. So they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. <sup>9</sup> And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

**MSH:** Now, again, we know the rest of the story. He gets knocked off his horse, so on so forth. He gets taken in by Ananias, and God speaks to Ananias and out of this, this is the conversion experience of Saul. He changes from one who persecuted the church to one who is going to be preaching Christ. Now, the first thing I want to sort of camp on a little bit is this issue of Damascus. Now it was mentioned two times in what we read. In the very next verse, there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias, you get another occurrence. You get three mentions of Damascus right here in this little portion of Scripture and so, hopefully, you're already asking the question I've told you asked before. When a place is named in the book of Acts, you might want to ask why. Now there won't always be something revelatory behind it, but places have histories. And for the original recipients of the book of Acts, they're going to know something about Damascus. It's going to mean something to them because places have histories, they have baggage and whatnot. So in the case of Damascus, Damascus is one of the oldest sites known

archaeologists in the holy land, and it has a long history in the Old Testament. It was the place where Abraham rescued his kinsman, namely Lot in Genesis 14. David brought Damascus within Israelite control during his reign, but during the reign of Solomon, it was lost. Now, what's kind of interesting here is, think about it, you have a reference to Damascus connected with Abraham, Genesis 14, where he rescues Lot. He pursues Lot's captors that far and then rescues Lot, brings him hand his stuff back. And for some reason, David wanted it under Israelite control. He wanted to be part of the kingdom, wanted to be part of it his reign, essentially, part of Israel, Yahweh's property, and then it's lost in Solomon's reign. Now, this gets us into actually a pretty complicated question. What exactly are the parameters of the Promised Land, because if something is mentioned with Abraham, connected to David, and, of course, then Solomon, chances are it's going to mean something. And in this case, it does. Think about what God said to Abraham when he separated from Lot back in Genesis 13. In verse 17 that we read, God says Abraham, 'Arise, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I will give it to you.' So we have that little ditty there. If we go to Joshua chapter 1, we have sort of a reference to something like this. Joshua 1 we read,

After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, <sup>2</sup>“Moses my servant is dead. Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel. <sup>3</sup>Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, just as I promised to Moses.

**MSH:** And, of course, the Mosaic promise goes back to this statement of Abraham. Because, remember, God calls Abraham, puts him in Canaan, says this is the promised land, then he says back in Genesis 13, hey, walk through the length and breadth the land because everywhere you walk, wherever you walk, that's what I'm giving to you. Well, it's not a coincidence that Abraham's feet, as it were, tread as far as Damascus. And so there's this sense that since Abraham was there, and it's within, but in antiquity would have been thought of as Canaan proper, that the “promised land” includes, it goes as far north as, Damascus. Now, the reality is that the Promised Land is even farther north than that. If you actually looked at a map of where some of these places are, Damascus is sort of just northeast of Mount Hermon. Mount Hermon, of course, is very famous, very notorious. This is just north of the region of Bashan, again, in my divine council stuff, I get into this geography a lot. Damascus is actually on the eastern side of the Jordan. If you just drew a line where the Jordan River goes north off to the east, you're going to get Damascus. It's actually a bit north of Mount Hermon. So this is where Abraham winds up. It takes the parameters of the Promised Land, in other words, what belongs to Yahweh, north to include a notorious place like Bashan and Mount Hermon. According to the book of Enoch, this is where the watchers descended, the Genesis 6:1-4 story, and, of course, the region of Bashan was known as the last bastion of the Rephaim, the giant clans there with Og of Bashan. And it takes you that far north, but it also gets into this stuff that's east of the Jordan River. There's actually, it's not very easy to determine because if you look at prophecy people talk about, well, the re-gathering of Israel and the founding of Israel in 1948, and this is a fulfillment of prophecy and all this kind of stuff, have you ever really looked to see how the Scripture decides what the promised land is? You get like three different accountings, and this is

part of that issue. Is Damascus in the original promise to Abraham? Is it included, even if it's not mentioned in the original promise to Abraham, or not? Since the original promise to Abraham goes as far north as the Hittite territory that was along the coast, it goes as far north as Damascus, but doesn't go easterly. And so there's this issue, well, was Damascus in or out as a part of the promise or not? Well, according to Genesis 13, God says, hey look, wherever your foot treads, just walk around here, wherever you walk, the length and the breadth of land, I'm going to give it to you. And He says the same thing to Joshua, and He had said the same thing the Moses. So this becomes part of an Old Testament Outlook on what exactly is the Promised Land. And for our purposes, in Acts, why would Damascus be mentioned? Well, it's mentioned because this is a territory that doesn't specifically come up in Acts chapter 2, but the writer wants you to know that this territory, this region is, again, under the domain of Yahweh. And this is going to be actually the last place; in this chapter we're getting a couple places. There's something that happens toward a little further on that's really, really complicated, really convoluted, and also involves Nephilim territory. But Acts 9 is picking off the last parts of the land that are sort of outliers that were not specifically included in the narratives, for Acts 2 on the way up to this point, that have some history of occupation where it rightfully should be included in the land of the promise but was under occupation by either suspect or hostile forces. And so, before we get into the actual ministry of Paul, this is when Paul, Saul gets converted to be Paul, before we actually transition out of this 'take the gospel to the Jew first and then also to the to the gentile,' before we make that full transition, we're still picking up pieces of the land that the writer wants you to know, were not overlooked. They're not either forgotten or it's not under a curse. It's not a spooky place. We don't want to touch that. There's none of that going on. Everything, even these places that have sort of an odd history or kind of a sinister history or questionable history, as the one we'll hit in a few moments, even those places God is making it clear. This is my domain and now after this chapter, after Acts chapter 9, we're going to start launching off into lands that are clearly, there's no dispute, clearly not included in the original land promises to Israel, but we're picked off a few the outliers here. Again, it's about messaging. The message of the Messiah needs to go to the Jew first. Okay, we get that. We've seen that four or five times working our way up here in the book of Acts. It also includes, as we saw last time, proselytes to Judaism, weren't naturally born but converted. And here we're going to get a couple places where there's a question mark. Again, is this something we should view within the promise or not? Well, the answer becomes yes if we allow Acts chapter 9 to sort of be a commentary on some of the Old Testament controversial places where there's ambiguity, where there's not absolute clarity on, is it in the promise or not? If you're looking at Acts 9 as sort of a commentary or filter, looking back in the Old Testament, the answer would be clear here because we have to sort of absorb these placements, we have to answer these questions because the gospel needs to be taken to the Jew first, their territory and their people, even people who converted to Judaism that weren't ethnically Jewish. We've got to cover all those bases and then, in Acts chapter 10, we can jump off into a territory that is clearly gentile material. So I wanted to make another comment about that because you have theological messaging in some of these sort of innocuous kind of details. Let's jump back into Acts 9 here, verse 10, we'll pick up.

<sup>10</sup> Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord." [MSH: Again, that's very formulaic language for the calling of prophets, the

calling of someone who is going to speak for God. That's all a prophet is, a spokesperson for God. That role fits Ananias because Ananias is going to testify to the validity of Saul's conversion, and also to the validity of what God told him and what God told Saul. So he's going to be a sort of a mediating figure between Saul, who will be Paul, and people who are freaked out by this, very naturally.]<sup>11</sup> And the Lord said to him, "Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas [MSH: Isn't that ironic] look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying,<sup>12</sup> and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight."<sup>13</sup> But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem."<sup>14</sup> And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name."

**MSH:** It's not an argument, but Ananias is disturbed by what God has asked him to do, what the Lord has asked him to do, and he has good reason. But the Lord convinces him, look, I know all that. This guy is the chosen instrument that might carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. Now, you need to go talk to him, and he does it. I want to park a little bit here on this one line, a little phrase here in verse 13, 'Ananias answered, Lord, I've heard about this man and how much you listen to your saints at Jerusalem'. Now I'll admit this is sort of a pet peeve of mine. I really dislike English translations that translate Greek *hagio*, that's what we have here, as saints. And it's not because I'm anti-Catholic. I wasn't a Catholic in my youth. I don't have any problem as far as just this point of irritation because of Catholicism. My point of irritation here is that a translation like saints mars important biblical theological imagery and analogy to the Old Testament. What *hagio* literally means is holy ones. And if you look back into the Old Testament, you say, well, why would Christians be called holy ones? Try to throw saints out of your head. It's a really unfortunate translation because it's going to interfere with what I'm going to get into now. Why would Christians be called holy ones? Well, one of the first questions you should ask yourself is, does that phrase, holy ones, however that is in Hebrews, *Kedoshim* in Hebrew, does that ever show up in the Old Testament? Well of course it does. This term holy ones is used of both divine beings, members of the Divine Council, and human beings. As far as examples where holy ones refers to divine beings, the Divine Council, you get Deuteronomy 33:2-3. That's the scene at Sinai. Yahweh is there with his holy ones. We get Job chapter 5:1 where one of Job's friends says, hey, is there anyone who will answer you Job, to which of the holy ones will you turn? Again, that introduces the idea of Divine Council mediation of some sort between the humans and God. Of course, in that context it's Job. Job 15:15, God puts no trust in his holy ones. Again, he knows they have free will. He knows they can choose to do wrong. There's a whole track record of that in the Old Testament. Psalm 89:5-7, let the heavens praise your wonders, O Lord, your faithfulness in the assembly of the holy ones. In Daniel chapter 4:17, we get two terms that are going to be familiar to this audience, the divine being speaking to Daniel in this vision says, the sentence that's been described in Daniel chapter 4 which concerns Nebuchadnezzar's madness, the sentence is by decree of the watchers, the decision by the word of the holy ones. That's actually an important reference because if you look at Daniel 4, think about what it's saying. The sentence is by the decree of the watchers, the decision by the word of the holy ones, plural. And then the rest of the verse says, to the end of

the living, they know that the Most High, that's singular, there's only one of those, that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will and sets over the lowliest of men. We have this sense of the holy ones, members of Divine Council, participating in divine decision-making of things happening on earth. Last reference would be Zechariah 14:5, when Yahweh at the last day of the end of days, a day of the Lord comes back to earth with his holy ones to judge of the wicked. So there's some very clear examples where holy ones refers to members of Divine Council, that's the whole point. There are also instances, and these are a little more obscure where holy ones, plural, refers to people, human beings. Leviticus 11:44-45, now this one would not sort of jump out at you and it's going to sound familiar but just bear with me here. Leviticus 11:44 says, 'For I am the Lord your God, consecrate yourselves, therefore, and be holy for I am holy.' Now the tricky part about this is the 'be holy', I'm reading the ESV translation. The word holy is actually plural, it's *Kedoshim*, it's like these other references. So the more accurate translation of the verb form is also plural. The more accurate translation would be 'be holy ones for I am holy.' Again, he's speaking to the believing community of God, or at least elect community of the Israelites, and if you've followed any of my research in the Divine Council, the whole point with the restoration of the kingdom, Israel, the people of God on earth post-Eden, is to revive or kick-start the Edenic idea, where God rules among people on earth, right there with them. And then we have to sort of turn our little spot on earth that is where the divine presence dwells, we have to expand that to the whole earth. That's the original Edenic commission, to be fruitful and multiply, then to overspread the earth and subdue it, have dominion over it. Again, turn the earth into Eden was the original command. Well, when we kick-start the kingdom through bringing the people out of Egypt, the Exodus, and here we are at Sinai, God turns around and says, hey, be holy ones for I am holy, there is a little bit of flavoring that goes on in that because the ultimate plan is to have, God wants a family of human beings with him. This is why the plurals in Genesis 1, I can't repeat the videos I've done on the whole Divine Council worldview, but the Edenic plan was that God would have a human family along with his unseen divine family, living together, ruling together on his behalf, one big new unified family with the goal that humanity would at some point be glorified. Again, if they hadn't fallen, since we did fall we look forward to being redeemed finally, the consummation of the whole plan of salvation is being glorified and made like him, like 1 John 3 says. We will be like him. We'll be more than human, that sort of thing. Well that kind of imagery, that kind of thinking, the restoration of the divine presence on earth with the kingdom, with a people, is designed specifically to go back to Eden, kick-start Eden, and have it work this time, because God has forgiven humanity. He's provided a means of salvation. He didn't destroy them like the nacas, the serpent, had assumed he would. That doesn't happen. We have the reinstatement of God's family, and his family means also his counsel, on earth through human beings. So if we were translating these terms holy ones, you'd sort of pick up on that idea, because of the way holy ones is used of divine beings. Here's another example, Daniel 8:24. We have a reference here or a use of the plural here. 'His power shall be great, but not by his own power. He shall cause fearful destruction and shall succeed in what he does, and destroy mighty men and the people who are the holy ones.' Again, this is a reference to a great earthly enemy of God, sort of an antichrist figure. But the object of what is happening there are the holy ones. Again, the ESV translates it 'saints'. This is just my hobby horse. It just ruins the imagery. Psalm 34:9, 'O' through the Lord, you, his holy ones.' There are references, very same word, same terminology, used of humans and divine beings. That is not accidental. We're supposed to be thinking of

believers, of people, who are faithful to Yahweh. We're supposed to be thinking about them the way we think about the divine beings in his counsel because they're six of one and half a dozen of another. The only difference between them is the fact that human beings are not on the other side. They are not in the spiritual world. They are not glorified, and earth has not been remade into Eden. That is eschatological stuff, since we have the problem of sin, since there's been this thing called the fall. But we're still supposed to be thinking about both groups in the same way. And so in both Testaments, when I see the translation saints, I just, honestly, I haven't done it, but I just want to scream. In church, I just roll my eyes. It's like, look at what you're missing just by this simple translation. If you literalized it, you would see connections back into the Old Testament in both these arenas. I want to take us a little bit further. Again, we already saw a passage of Daniel 4 about the holy ones participating, the Divine Council participating, in decision-making. Let me just introduce you to a couple of passages. You can go study them. You can think about them, because they could go either way. So I'm being honest with you here. There's a lot of ambiguity in the text, but there are couple disputed passages whether *Kedoshim*, a plural of the word *Kedosh*, whether it should be translated and understood as plural or as singular. Well, you say that's sort of an odd question to even raise. Well, think of it like Elohim. Elohim is morphologically plural but in many contexts. it means a singular entity, the God of Israel. Sometimes this happens with *Kedoshim* as well. You don't know whether it's talking about the holy one, God, or holy ones, plural. Here's a couple verses, Proverbs 9:10 says in the ESV, 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the holy one is insight.' Believe it or not, holy one there is plural. You could translate it, 'the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge the holy ones is insight.' It sort of gives a little street cred, a little heavenly cred, to the Divine Council there, if it is, indeed, meant to be understood as a plural. Proverbs 30:3, same thing, says, 'I have not learned wisdom nor have I knowledge of the holy one. It's plural. You could translate it, 'I have not learned wisdom nor have I knowledge of the holy ones.' Now the reason why these two plural references could be singular, and that's the way the ESV has both of them if you notice the translation, is in this next verse, Hosea 11:12, which, in the Hebrew text, if you're looking at this in Hebrew, if any of you know Hebrew, it's going to be actually a different verse reference. It's chapter 12:1. But in English Bibles, it's Hosea 11:12, says this. 'Ephraim has surrounded me with lies and the house of Israel with deceit. But Judah still walks with God and is faithful to the holy one,' or is it holy ones? Well, because of the parallelism there, 'walks with God, faithful to the holy ones,' it is probably better is to see that a singular, 'walks with God, faithful to the holy one.' It just makes sense. But the fact is, in those other two verses, it sort of could go either way. But you can make an argument based on Hosea 11:12 that those two other verses should be singular as well. So you can chew over that. Think about that. Do with it what you want. And we're going to go back to Acts chapter 9. I want to skip down to about verse 20, when we get here in Acts chapter 9. So Ananias takes care Paul/Saul and we read in verse 20, or at the end of verse 19,

For some days he was with the disciples at Damascus.<sup>20</sup> And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God."

<sup>21</sup> And all who heard him were amazed and said, "Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem of those who called upon this name? And has he not come here for this purpose, to bring them bound before the chief



priests?" [MSH: Well, the answer to all that is yeah, it's the same guy]  
<sup>22</sup> But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ.

**MSH:** Now, I want to take two phrases here, son of God, he is the son of God, and this notion of proving that Jesus was the Christ. Now, I'm just going to make a comment because you can go back and listen to previous episodes. Remember how we talked about the word *Moshiach*, the word Messiah, and the word *Cristas*, these are titles. And with the overwhelming New Testament use of the title *Cristas*, which is the Greek form of messiah, *Moshiach*, it was always associated with one or two things, a handful of key ideas. And one of which was in the death, burial, and especially the resurrection of Jesus. So when New Testament writers are talking about the Christ, they're talking about the full order gospel. And you say why are you bringing it up? Well, if we can see in verse 22 proving that Jesus was the Christ, again, it obviously uses the title there, he is the Messiah, the eschatological messiah, the ultimate messiah, the M. messiah. This guy was the M. messiah. Then, in verse 20, when it says that Paul was persuading them that Jesus was the son of God, the phrase son of God there, therefore, because of Jesus was the Christ two verses later, the phrase son of God in verse 20 has to mean more than just the Royal King figure from the line of David. Now, what I mean here is that if you look in the Old Testament, in the Old Testament the phrase son of God referred to, it's used of Israel as a nation, that's Exodus 4:22, and it's also used of the king of Israel, 2 Samuel 7:14, Psalm 89:26-27, God refers to the king as my son. So there would be those interpreters that say, look, this was all Paul's talking about. Paul believes Jesus was of the line of David. He's descended from David. Paul isn't loading any of his theological stuff on the title son of God. He's not talking about like the M messiah here. Jesus is just a descendent of David. That's where we draw the line. That's all Paul's talking about. All this resurrection stuff here comes later, and the Christians invented that later. And it got imported by scribes back in the New Testament. This is the Bart Ehrman kind of thinking. That is just bunk because of the way *Cristas* two verses later has been front loaded with all of these references as we saw earlier in our study of Acts, all of the baggage that associates that title with a divine being, a resurrected being, a glorified being, who now sits at the right hand of God and fulfills this great eschatological role in conjunction with the coming of the Spirit. These promises that were given the Old Testament about the Spirit of God coming, forgiveness, that whole thing, reclaiming the nations, which is a heavy eschatological messianic theme, again, recovering, bringing the nations back into the fold, that sort of thing. That was not just in the days of the Israelite kings prior to the exile. That kind of talk is associated with the coming of the Kingdom of God, the real Kingdom of God, the big one, and one that includes everything, the one that includes all the nations. So because of this backdrop of the way *Cristas* was thought of and the way it's used by New Testament writers, we need to look at son of God in its fullness, and not just restricted to David's line, that's it. It just doesn't work here. So I wanted to make that comment as well. And lastly, in this chapter, something to notice here. If we go down a little ways to verse 23,

<sup>23</sup> When many days had passed, the Jews plotted to kill him, <sup>24</sup> but their plot became known to Saul. They were watching the gates day and night in order to kill him, <sup>25</sup> but his disciples took him by night and let him down

through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket. **[MSH: So Saul gets away. He goes to Jerusalem.]**

<sup>26</sup> And when he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples. And they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple. <sup>27</sup> But Barnabas **[MSH: Another character who we've seen earlier, from Cyprus, one of these places not mentioned in Acts 2. The writer's creating a web. All these things are related. Everybody is on the same team. It all goes back to Acts 2. It all goes back to the Spirit. It's all a fulfillment of the Old Testament.]** took him and brought him to the apostles and declared to them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who spoke to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus. <sup>28</sup> So he went in and out among them at Jerusalem, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord.

**MSH:** So when we get down now to verse 32, we transition to Peter. Peter soon will be out of the picture in the book of Acts. It's going to be sort of Paul onstage for most of the rest of the book once you get out of chapter 10 and 11 and whatnot. But now we hit Peter in verse 32, and it says,

<sup>32</sup> Now as Peter went here **[MSH: Earlier verse talked about Judea and Galilee and Samaria and all that stuff.]** and there among them all, **[MSH: He's visiting people who've come to the Lord.]** he came down also to the saints **[MSH: there it is again, holy ones]** who lived at Lydda. <sup>33</sup> There he found a man named Aeneas, bedridden for eight years, who was paralyzed. <sup>34</sup> And Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; rise and make your bed." And immediately he rose. <sup>35</sup> And all the residents of Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord.

**MSH:** You already know what question I'm going to ask. Why Lydda? What's the big deal? What's up with that place? Again, Lydda is just north east of a town that we've seen already called Azotus which had a, again, that was the Hellenistic name for one of the Philistine cities, and so we talked about how here's another part of the land, another little strip of land that was under Philistine control and the narrator brings it in here to make us realize, okay, even though this was a place that has baggage, was associated with the Rephaim who were Nephilim descendants, and all this stuff. These people too, the Gospel's going here and it's working. Jesus has power over this place. They are being brought into the kingdom of God. So Lydda or Lod, as it's called in the Old Testament, is near this place. It's not the same place. It's just adjacent. To try to summarize some of this in kind of quick fashion here, what you have going on here, if you look up the four occurrences of the word Lod in the Hebrew Bible, LOD, you're going to find that it has, it's a bit of an unusual history. You're going to find it in 1 Chronicles chapter 8:12. That's probably the most important reference and I'm just going to go there quickly, and I'll read it to you. It's not going to sound like anything important but it is in the genealogy of the Benjamites, King Saul, this was his tribe back in the Old Testament. And that's 1 Chronicles 8, the first nine

chapters of 1 Chronicles is nothing but genealogy. So we're right in the middle of that, right toward the end of it, anyway. We get to verse 12 it says,

<sup>12</sup>The sons of Elpaal: Eber, Misham, and Shemed, who built Ono and Lod with its towns,

**MSH:** You say, who gives a rip? Who cares? Big deal, this is the genealogy of Benjamin. The city of Lod does not fall within Benjamite territory in the Old Testament. It, therefore, there's a question of what is this place? Whose territory really is it? Why are Benjamite's living in it after the exile, which is when you get 1 Chronicles? Why do they go back there? Why do they live in it? And if it's not really in their territory, whose territory is it in? You'll find from references in Joshua when the allotments are given, again, I'm summarizing a lot of pretty convoluted complex stuff. You'll find that Lod was either, again you can't be completely certain because of where the tribes overlap, the tribal boundaries overlap, and Lod is or isn't mentioned. But it's assumed you'll find it's either in the tribal allotment to what would've been Samaria, Shimon, that area up there. We've already talked about Samaria before. That was the northern kingdom that apostatized and whatnot, or, and here's where I lean, or it's in the territory that winds up being in the place where the people from the tribe of Dan lived. Now Dan, and for those of you who don't know, is one of these Old Testament mysteries. And it's because of numerous conflicting things said about Dan in the Old Testament. I'll just give you few instances. Usually, when you get a place or a person, this case Dan, a tribal name in the genealogy, they tend to be listed in the same numerical order or in the same place. There's a little variation but it's usually pretty consistent. Dan is never consistent. It can be second. It can be fourth. It could be sixth. It could be tenth. It could be twelfth. It's just all over the place, so that has really sort of raised eyebrows among scholars like, why does it keep changing positions and sometimes, sometimes, it's not even mentioned. It's actually skipped. If you actually go through, and I don't really recommend it unless you're looking for a way to cure insomnia, but if you look through, read through 1 Chronicles 1-9, you don't get a treatment of the genealogy of Dan. I dropped a few hints before in I think at least one other episode, and definitely if you've read a few things either in my myth draft or even in my novel, the latest one, there's a suspicion that's cast over the tribe of Dan. The tribe of Dan originally was allotted territory near Benjamin but they left. The people the tribe of Dan were ones that were mentioned the book of Judges as having failed to drive out the Giants, the Anakim, okay, and they just didn't do the job. And so they got into a bad situation, again, summarizing a lot of the details, and they decided eventually to move north. The tribe migrated. If you remember in the book of Judges, this is when you get the weird story about the Danites and the Levite who had sort of an idle with him, and they kidnapped this guy, and he was going to be their priest and they move up north. They take the city of *Leisch*, and they rename it Dan. Of course, later in Dan's history, what happens becomes a cult center to Baal. It's right there nestled right next to Mount Hermon. You get all these bad associations with Dan because they forsook their inheritance. They migrate north, and they wind up in these northern parts. Well, it could be, because of this migration, that this place name Lod, here, that shows up in Acts chapter 9, Lydda or Lod, is in Danite territory, right on the boundary. So what's the point? What's the theological messaging? Well, think about it. You have a tribe that has a bad history, it's a questionable history. They did not drive out the giant clans. Their

original territory, in fact, some of it gets taken over by the giant clans. They move north and they're idolaters. The place becomes a cult center to Baal. It's in the region of Bashan, right up there next to Mount Hermon. This is the territory of the Rephaim, the bad guys, more giant clans the Old Testament. There's just a shadow, a sinister shadow, over the tribe of Dan. The whole prophecy thing in the book of Revelation about the 144,000, if you actually go read Revelation chapter 4 where the 144,000 are listed, guess which tribe is not there? Dan, it's omitted. Why? All of this stuff cumulatively, even during the Second Temple period before we had Christians, but certainly after the rise of Christianity, the tribe of Dan became intertwined because they settled in the region of the serpent Bashan. It became part of the antichrist teaching, antichrist speculation, that the tribe of Dan had something to do with a great enemy that would rise in the north, that would be associated with this really icky stuff, like Mount Hermon, the watchers, the Nephilim, all this kind of stuff, Dan just had a shadow over it. And so here in the book of Acts, before we get chapter 10, when Peter's going to have his vision about taking the Gospel to the Gentiles, and Paul's going to do that, this last scrap of land in Canaan, in the holy land that the writer wants us to be sure that the Gospel has power over this place, is, guess what, it's Lydda, it's Lod, and it attaches itself to the region of Dan, to the tribe of Dan. So they're not getting skipped either is the point, they are part of this reclamation process. The Gospel has power in that place, too, despite all the baggage, despite all the spooky stuff, that is associated with that region, the Gospel has power there. Because if you go back and look, look what happens with Aeneas. In this place, Peter finds a man named Aeneas bedridden for eight years. He's paralyzed. Peter says rise and make your bed, and immediately, he rose. And in the last line here, 'and all the residents of Lydda and Sharon,' which is the plain right next to it, a geographical plain next to it, 'saw him and they turned to the Lord.' The next part of the chapters is Joppa, the story of Dorcas and Tabitha. We know that story a little bit more. It's in the same region. Joppa, Azotus, Lod, all these places that have sinister associations, the point is that the Spirit has power in those places to the same degree and for the same reasons and with the same thoroughness as anywhere else. It doesn't matter what cosmic geographical associations have accrued to a place. It's all the Lord's. It will be reclaimed. Going back to Matthew 16, the gates of hell will not be able to prevail against the Church, against the Gospel, and these are living illustrations in the cosmic geographical thinking of the time. They're living illustrations that this is serious. This plan is serious. Nothing is going to be omitted and overlooked. It's all going to be put under the authority of the King. It's all under the power of God. So, again, I know that's a little scattershot for Acts chapter 9, but I wanted to highlight some of the things that usually get overlooked, that feed into this thing that I call the Divine Council worldview of Scripture.

**TS:** That's a content-filled episode right there. That was great. That's amazing how just a little translation of the saints takes a whole other imagery. It's just amazing.

**MSH:** If you're hearing that, and if you know the Genesis stories, if you know this whole concept of God and the Divine Council, the heavenly host, and especially what Genesis 1, its temple building. Eden is God's living place. It's his living room, and it is where he lives. It's where he conducts business. The council's there. Adam and Eve are there. We're supposed to be there. We are supposed to be there. And you know why we're not. Just that much of an observation raises the question, well, how do we fix that problem? Again, that's the book of Acts. We'll tell you how

to fix that problem. You have Jesus, who, by the way, you guys put to death, but it's okay. He rose again. He's offering forgiveness, you know, the whole plan of salvation is right there.

**TS:** That's another reason why we need a Heiser translated Bible. We'll be waiting for that to come out.

**MSH:** You'll be waiting a long time for that.

**TS:** Even the whole tribe of Dan, that sure would make a great story in a novel.

**MSH:** Yeah it would. We'll see what we can do with that one. That will happen before the translation Galilean at that up at hi all we'll say we can do it fast that the battle has ended for the nano that I made for the translation.