



March 13, 2022

## “Damascus Encounter”

Acts 9:1-9

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### **Damascus Encounter Defined**

A direct, vivid, overwhelming, unmistakable, path-altering encounter with God

Two categories: fully awake and in visions/dreams

See Biblical survey on reverse side

### **General Observations of Damascus Encounters**

A. Fear, falling down, holiness, traumatic, paralyzing, dramatic

B. Happens at a critical crossroads

C. Alter the trajectory, direct the path of the one encountered

### **Saul’s Damascus Road Observed Specifically: Acts 9:1-9**

A. Trauma: Saul falls down, is blinded, the men around him are speechless, lost appetite

B. Great persecution in Jerusalem (Acts 8:1), the beginning of mission expansion (8:4)

C. Saul to Paul, persecutor to Apostle (9:15), causing suffering to suffering for (9:16)

### **Two Reflections About Damascus Encounters**

1. These encounters are the exception not the rule, and not to be sought after

They are only given when necessary

An analogy in driving: the exceptional nature of the swerve and skid

Seeking after dramatic signs is different than seeking God

Older couples seeking to recapture the flutterings of adolescent dating

Are we willing to know God in ice chips rather than fire hydrants

Elijah’s firefall (and subsequent depression): 1 Kings 18:17-19:8

Elijah’s lesson at the mouth of the mountain cave: 1 Kings 19:9-18

Can we be content to know God in the gentler ways He will set before us?

2. Understanding the fear of the Lord: see Proverbs 1:7, 9:10

Fear is a response to anything that can hurt you

The mugger, the lion, the forest fire, the cliff edge, the doctor

Fear doesn’t distinguish the moral character of the object but the presence of power

Fear of the Lord = is safe nearness to immensity + surety of goodness

A storm from shelter, a beekeeper’s suit, a safari vehicle, rollercoaster, Yosemite waterfall

Fear transforms from horror to awe: see Psalm 2:11 (rejoice with trembling)

## A Survey of Damascus Encounters in the Bible

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Fully Awake		Vision/Dream
Jacob wrestles God: Gen 32:22-32		Abraham & the glowing pot: Gen 15:1-21
Moses and the burning bush: Ex 3:1-6		Jacob's ladder dream: Gen 28:10-17
Israel at Mount Sinai: Ex 19:7-25		Ezekiel vision of God's glory Ezek 1:4-28
Joshua meets the commander: Josh 5:13-15		Daniel's vision of the Man: Dan 10:1-21
Job and the whirlwind: Job 38:1-42:6		John on Patmos: Rev 1:9-20
Isaiah and the burning coals: Isa 6:1-8		
Transfiguration: Luke 9:28-26		
Paul on the Damascus Road: Acts 9:1-9		