

ACTS 9:20-31

At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. ²¹ All those who heard him were astonished and asked, "Isn't he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name? And hasn't he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?" ²² Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Messiah.

²³ After many days had gone by, there was a conspiracy among the Jews to kill him, ²⁴ but Saul learned of their plan. Day and night they kept close watch on the city gates in order to kill him. ²⁵ But his followers took him by night and lowered him in a basket through an opening in the wall.

²⁶ When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. ²⁷ But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus. ²⁸ So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. ²⁹ He talked and debated with the Hellenistic Jews, but they tried to kill him. ³⁰ When the believers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.

³¹ Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers.

What is one significant change that you hope to make in your life this year?

What was the focus of Saul's message? How did people react to their former enemy?

Why did the disciples mistrust Saul in Jerusalem? How did Barnabas help the apostles accept Saul and why was this so important?

In what ways is Saul's experience in Jerusalem ironically similar to that of Stephen (refer to week 11, page 68)?

How did God use Saul's past to powerfully share about Jesus?

How have you seen the Lord use your life before Jesus to impact others for the gospel?

DAILY READINGS

1. 1 SAMUEL 16:1-13
2. JEREMIAH 1:4-19
3. ROMANS 15:14-21
4. 1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-11
5. 1 CORINTHIANS 15:58
6. 1 TIMOTHY 1:12-20
7. ACTS 9:20-31