

## The Ministry of Apostle Paul Series

### From Saul the Devout Jew to Paul the Devout Apostle - Cont.

May 19, 2019

Scripture Text: Acts 9:20-28 NKJV

**20 Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.**

**21 Then all who heard were amazed, and said, "Is this not he who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem, and has come here for that purpose, so that he might bring them bound to the chief priests?"**

**22 But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this Jesus is the Christ.**

**23 Now after many days were past, the Jews plotted to kill" him. 24 But their plot became known to Saul. And they watched the gates day and night, to kill him. 25 Then the disciples took him by night and let him down through the wall in a large basket.**

**26 And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and did not believe that he was a disciple. 27 But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. And he declared to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. 28 So he was with them at Jerusalem, coming in and going out.**

**VERSE 20 *Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.***

Saul was fully converted and filled with the Holy Spirit qualifying him to be a disciple and a witness for Christ. Need I say, there is no witness without the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. **We can't be or give what we don't possess.** Ephesians 1:13-14 NKJV *In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.*

The Holy Spirit enables us to reach beyond our human abilities to accomplish the will of God. The Apostle John wrote in I John 4:4 NKJV *"You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world."*

**VERSE 21 *Then all who heard were amazed, and said, "Is this not he who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem, and has come here for that purpose, so that he might bring them bound to the chief priests?"***

People should be amazed at your transformation from your old lifestyle (Sinner to Saint). The

evidence of the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit not only enables us to witness but He convinces and convicts' others of the truth that we share. Some of the believers had great difficulty in believing that his conversion was legitimate. After all, he had created havoc in the city and cast a net of fear in all those who believed in Christ.

*John 16:13 NKJV "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come."*

How would you have reacted if you were a member of the church in Jerusalem? Would you be afraid that he was faking it in order to ensnare the believers or would you welcome him with open arms?

**VERSE 22** *But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this Jesus is the Christ.*

God used Saul with his knowledge of the scriptures to press home the truth about Jesus as the Messiah. He had gone to Damascus to persecute the believers but ended up contending for the faith. We may make break habits but only God can change a man's character. I Corinthians 5:17 KJV *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."* Each day, Saul became bolder in his proclamation of Jesus the Christ as revealed in scripture.

**VERSE 23** *Now after many days were past, the Jews plotted to kill" him.*

Through Saul's words and convincing testimony people believed and counted him as a brother, while others sought to take his life. Some who sought to kill him may have had members in their families that he had put in prison or put to death.

Many Jewish leaders were in opposition of Saul and the effect that he was having on the people. So, they looked for ways to end his life. It became abundantly clear that they ignored the truth and were bent on exacting revenge. Leviticus 19:18 NLT *"Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against a fellow Israelite, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD."*

There may have been someone in your current or past life that may have brought harm to you but remember God will exact the right amount of judgement.

**VERSE 24** *But their plot became known to Saul. And they watched the gates day and night, to kill him.*

Your enemies can plan and plot losing precious sleep for your demise. There is one thing that you can depend upon, if God called you into ministry, He has your back and will make your enemies a personal footstool.

Psalms 110:1 NKJV *The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool."* Psalms 124:1-2 KJV *If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, now may Israel say; <sup>2</sup> If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, when men rose up against us:*

**VERSE 25** *Then the disciples took him by night and let him down through the wall in a large basket.*

God will devise the perfect plan for your escape if you are willing to trust Him, even if it out of the box or shall I say, basket. We know that Saul escaped over the wall in a basket. I Corinthians 10:13 KJV *No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.*

It was known that Saul spent time in Arabia and some theologians believe that it was to pray, mediate and study in preparation for his ministry.

**VERSE 26** *And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and did not believe that he was a disciple.*

Saul had left Jerusalem to pursue and persecute the church in Damascus but God had other plans for him. The persecutor became the persecuted and he failed to convince some of the church brethren. Even though people were being converted, they refused to trust him because of his past.

Sometimes because of the way a person has lived their life, other people may find reasons not to believe their testimony. The negative memories can overshadow the good things that are happening in that person's life.

Jesus had taught His disciples to forgive. Matthew 6:14-15 NKJV *“For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: **15** But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”*

**VERSE 27** *But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. And he declared to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.*

God will always have people who have His heart of love, forgiveness and acceptance. Barnabas (Son of Encouragement) for Saul's sake was true to his name. It was clear to Barnabas that God had given Saul favor and was using him to reach others in a powerful way.

Those who had believed and accepted Barnabas' testimony concerning Saul's conversion gladly allowed him to stay with them.

**VERSE 28** *So he was with them at Jerusalem, coming in and going out.*

Saul boldly shared his testimony concerning Jesus as the Messiah to every door that God made available. God will enable you to boldly proclaim Him in the presence of your enemies. Do you share with others about the wonderful things that the Lord has done for you? **If you have been saved and set free from the penalty of sin, you have a lot to talk about!**

#### APPLICATIONS:

The Holy Spirit is the Enabler to assist us in sharing our testimony and faith.

You are authorized to speak on behalf of Jesus by the Holy Spirit's power.