

Valley Bible Church
Sermon Notes for June 9, 2013

The Conspiracy Against Saul in Jerusalem
Acts 9:26-31

Luke concluded the stories of the Samaritans' conversion (8:4-25), of Saul's conversion (9:1-31), and of Cornelius' conversion (10:1-11:18) with Jerusalem, showing these events were united in the spread of the gospel from Jerusalem.

1. The fear of the disciples (9:26)

Like Ananias before them, the disciples in Jerusalem were naturally skeptical of Saul, because when they had last known Saul, he was a threat to their lives.

2. The faith of Barnabas (9:27)

In Damascus, Saul needed Ananias and in Jerusalem he needed Barnabas, the “Son of Encouragement” (Acts 4:36-37). Barnabas had faith not just in Saul but in God.

The apostles that are referred to by Luke are Peter and James, the Lord’s half brother (cf. Galatians 1:19).

3. The freedom for Saul (9:28)

Saul’s life had now come full circle. He left Jerusalem as Christ’s persecutor and returned as Christ’s preacher. He participated in the murder of Stephen (cf. Acts 8:1) and then participated in furthering the work that Stephen had begun (cf. Acts 6:8-10).

4. The fight against the Greek Jews (9:29)

Following in Stephen’s footsteps, Saul’s ministry was to those who were of his similar culture, the Hellenistic Jews. As he encountered in Damascus, the Hellenistic Jews plotted to kill him.

5. The flight of Saul (9:30)

Saul’s departure from Jerusalem was not only orchestrated by Saul’s fellow disciples but was ordered by God (Acts 22:17-21).

Saul was taken down to the coastal city of Caesarea, because it was the most Gentile city in Judea. Caesarea was the capital of the Roman province, and the presence of the Roman governors made this a more difficult place for a Jewish mob to gather.

Saul's final destination was his hometown of Tarsus, a large city near the coast in present day Turkey, where it appears that he remained for about the next ten years (Galatians 1:21-2-1).

6. The fruitfulness of the church (9:31)

The peace that the church found in the region appears to be related to Paul's departure from the region, demonstrating the force of the Jewish hatred of Saul.

This verse is one of the seven "progress reports" that show the expansion of the universal church. The spread of the word of God is repeatedly seen in Acts with several years separating each report (cf. Acts 6:7; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20; 28:31).

The description of the church as growing in numbers teaches us:

- Growth is the result, not the goal of ministry
- Growth is related to peace in the church
- Growth is related to the edification of the church
- Growth is related to the fear of the Lord
- Growth is related to the ministry of the Holy Spirit

The resources that the early church lacked did not limit their ability to do God's work in God's way.

May God enable us to minister according to His principles instead of the world's pragmatism.