



Handout for week of 4/23/18 John 15: 1-8 & Acts 9: 26-31
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Acts 9: 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 Grecian Jews, but they tried to kill him. 30

When the brothers 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. It was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord.

COMMENTARY: When [Saul the persecutor](#), later Paul the Apostle, made his first visit (dated variously from A.D. 33 to 38) to Jerusalem after his [conversion](#), the [Church](#) there, remembering his former fierce spirit, was slow to [believe](#) in the reality of his [conversion](#). Barnabas stood sponsor for him and had him received by the [Apostles](#), as the Acts relate ([9:27](#)), though he saw only Peter and James, the brother of the Lord, according to Paul himself ([Galatians 1:18-19](#)). Saul went to his house at [Tarsus](#) to live in obscurity for some years, while Barnabas appears to have remained at [Jerusalem](#). The event that brought them together again and opened to both the door to their lifework was an indirect result of Saul's own [persecution](#). In the dispersion that followed Stephen's death, some Disciples from [Cyprus](#) and Cyrene, obscure men, inaugurated the real mission of the [Christian Church](#) by preaching to the [Gentiles](#). They met with great success among the Greeks at Antioch in [Syria](#), reports of which coming to the ears of the Apostles, Barnabas was sent thither by them to investigate the work of his countrymen. He saw in the conversions effected the fruit of [God's grace](#) and, though a [Jew](#), heartily welcomed these first [Gentile](#) converts. His mind was opened at once to the possibility of this immense field. It is a [proof](#) how deeply impressed Barnabas had been by Paul that he thought of him immediately for this work, set out without delay for distant Tarsus, and persuaded Paul to go to Antioch and begin the work of preaching. This incident, shedding light on the character of each, shows it was no mere accident that led them to the [Gentile](#) field. Together they laboured at Antioch for a whole year and "taught a great multitude". Then, on the coming of famine, by which [Jerusalem](#) was much afflicted, the offerings of the Disciples at Antioch were carried (about A.D. 45) to the mother-church by Barnabas and Saul ([Acts 11](#)). Their mission ended, they returned to [Antioch](#), bringing with them the cousin, or nephew of Barnabas ([Colossians 4:10](#)), [John Mark](#), the future [Evangelist](#) ([Acts 12:25](#)).