

Tarsus to the fellow believers in Damascus. Believers in Damascus who heard Saul of Tarsus preach that Jesus was indeed the Son of God also became his acquaintances. GALATIANS 1:18 indicates that Saul of Tarsus was in and out of Damascus the better part of three years. Somewhere during this three year time frame Barnabas became acquainted with Saul of Tarsus. Ananias may have introduced Barnabas to Saul of Tarsus, or Barnabas may have been passing through Damascus one day when Saul of Tarsus spoke in one of the synagogues of Damascus. At any rate at some point in time during Saul of Tarsus' stay in Damascus, Barnabas got well acquainted with him. We will see this in more detail when we get to ACTS 9:27.

For now, equipped with some of these facts, let's turn to ACTS 9:23-25 and read what is said there. ACTS 9:23 *And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him: 24 But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. 25 Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket.* The "many days" of ACTS 9:23 are the "three years" of GALATIANS 1:18, which reads in part: *Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem...*

What so upset the Jews of Damascus against Saul of Tarsus that they set out to kill him? It was his preaching. Saul of Tarsus' preaching the truth didn't line up with their perception of the truth. ACTS 9:20 tells us that he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 CORINTHIANS 1:21-24 these words: *For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. 22 For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: 23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; 24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.* The unbelieving Jews of Damascus didn't receive Saul of Tarsus preaching as the truth, because this kind of preaching to them was a stumblingblock to them, for they were the very ones who had Jesus crucified. They didn't want to hear, or receive as fact Jesus the Son of God. They didn't want to listen to someone as high profile as Saul of Tarsus telling them that they were wrong in their unbelief of Jesus. So we read in ACTS 9:23 *And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him.* 2 CORINTHIANS 11:32 & 33 expounds upon this fact: *In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me: 33 And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands.* Obviously the Jews of Damascus had great influence over the governor which was under king Aretas, and talked him into having troops look for Saul of Tarsus, with the sole purpose of arresting and killing him. ACTS 9:24 tells us: *But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him.* It was Saul of Tarsus only friends, these disciples of the Lord in Damascus, who aided his escape. ACTS 9:25 tells us: *Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket.* 2 CORINTHIANS 11:33 told us: *And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands.*

Never more do we read of Saul of Tarsus, or the Apostle Paul in Damascus. I imagine the night he escaped Damascus was the last time he ever saw his good friend Ananias of Damascus. Saul of Tarsus never set out from Jerusalem to make Damascus his home. Yet after being saved Damascus became Saul of Tarsus' first Christian home, so to speak. But now he has had to escape because the Jews took council to kill him. This was just the beginning of the many great things he was to suffer for Jesus name's sake that the Lord had spoken unto Ananias about in ACTS 9:16.

Paul's first visit back to Jerusalem after being Saved

So where was Saul of Tarsus to go now? We read in ACTS 9:26 and GALATIANS 1:18 that he went back to Jerusalem, which he had left some three years earlier with the blessings of the high priests. Now these same high priests too were his enemies, for Saul of Tarsus had become a believer. So Saul of Tarsus really had no friends in Jerusalem now to return too, and those who were his former so called friends would be looking also to arrest him. ACTS 9:26 tells us: *And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a*

disciple. The disciples of Jerusalem were the very ones who knew best the reputation of old Saul of Tarsus, the great Christian persecutor. The disciples of Jerusalem all knew Stephen, and how he was killed, and how Saul of Tarsus was there consenting unto his death. The disciples of Jerusalem knew many that Saul of Tarsus had put in prison. The disciples of Jerusalem knew that Saul of Tarsus caused a great scattering abroad of the disciples from Jerusalem. The disciples of Jerusalem didn't want to be associated with Saul of Tarsus knowing his past reputation.

Let's consider the big split that took place in the church at Jerusalem for a minute. As we noted above Saul of Tarsus was the main one responsible for the great scattering abroad of the disciples from Jerusalem. ACTS 8:1, 3 & 4 tells us: 1 *And Saul was consenting unto his (Stephen's) death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles. ...3 As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison. 4 Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.* Read on in ACTS 8 or ACTS 9 or even later chapters and you don't find a evil or bad word spoken by the disciples against Saul of Tarsus even though he was responsible for the great scattering abroad of the disciples from Jerusalem. Some of these same disciples from Jerusalem were personally aquatinted with Jesus when He was here on earth. Some of these same disciples were also the apostles.

Let me read a little of Jesus instructions to His disciples first from the book of LUKE. LUKE 6:20 *And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God. 21 Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh. 22 Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. 23 Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets. 24 But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. 25 Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep. 26 Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets. 27 But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, 28 Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you. 29 And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not to take thy coat also. 30 Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again. 31 And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. 32 For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. 33 And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. 34 And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. 35 But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. 36 Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.*

We see an underlying theme of love in the above verses, and this is not man's natural love, but rather the love of Jesus Christ that should shine forth out of the Christian life. This means that the Christians that were persecuted by Saul of Tarsus before he got saved were to show him the love of Christ. Stephen in fact did so at his stoning by crying out with a loud voice, spoken from a forgiving heart: "*Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.*" {ACTS 7:60}. It was this kind of Christian love that pierced the heart of Saul of Tarsus to the point that when Jesus appeared unto him on the road to Damascus Jesus made this statement: "*it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks,*" meaning "it is hard for you to go against the pricking of your conscience." {See again ACTS 9:5}. It was the love of Jesus Christ that really was pricking Saul of Tarsus conscience, and this love of Christ was first shown unto him by the very same Christians he persecuted, Stephen being one of the many Saul of Tarsus persecuted.

During the last supper Jesus spoke many things unto his disciples. Peter and John being prominent among them. In JOHN 13 we read these very words of Jesus spoken at

the last supper: JOHN 13:34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. 35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. Again in JOHN 15 we read some more words spoken by Jesus the night of the last supper. JOHN 15:9 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. 10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. 11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. 12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. 13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. 14 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. 15 Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. 16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. 17 These things I command you, that ye love one another.

We know that Peter and John, and the other kingdom apostles heard these words, and with the aid and guidance of the Holy Ghost shed abroad the love of Jesus Christ in their respective ministries. Both of these Apostles wrote much about the love of Christ. Peter wrote in 1 PETER 1 these Holy Ghost inspired words: 18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; 19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: 20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, 21 Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. 22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: 23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. Again in 1 PETER 3 Peter wrote: 8 Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: 9 Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. 10 For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: 11 Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. 12 For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

The Apostle John also spoke and wrote much about the love of Christ. I want to read just a little of what he had to say from 1 JOHN 3 & 4. 1 JOHN 3:1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. 3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. ...11 For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. ...23 And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. 1 JOHN 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. 8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. 9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. 10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation (an appeasing) for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. 12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. 13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. 14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. 15 Whosoever

shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. 16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. 17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. 18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. 19 We love him, because he first loved us. 20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? 21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

Why did we say all of this? And what does this have to do with our lessons on the Apostle Paul? Again let's read ACTS 9:26 *And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.* It doesn't say here in ACTS 9:26 that they didn't love Saul of Tarsus, but it does say that they were all afraid of him, and they didn't believe he was a disciple. So what if he wasn't a disciple, which he now most definitely was, shouldn't the Jerusalem disciples show him the love of God too? According to the scriptures we read above yes they were, but fear came upon them. Didn't we just read above in 1 JOHN 4:18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment? Yes we did. So we find the disciples at Jerusalem having difficulty displaying the love of God properly as they should. Had they had this perfect love manifest in their lives they would have welcomed with open arms Saul of Tarsus as the believer he was. I think we all have had experiences along these same lines ourselves. Think how you have been treated by other Saints, and think also how you have treated them. We have all been disappointed at one time or another with the actions of fellow Saints. We are still to love them with the love of God. We are not to fear these Saints because of their actions. The full overcomers will be the ones who among many other things will have conquered, or overcome this kind of fear. The full overcomers will truly display the love of God when confronted in these kinds of situations.

Now let me jump ahead in time for a moment and consider some of these very same disciples in Jerusalem about some twenty years later. At this future time we find the Apostle Paul returning from his third missionary journey and arriving at Jerusalem during the time of passover, a much celebrated Jewish feast. James the pastor there at Jerusalem listens to Paul explain what marvelous things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry. We find this in ACTS 21:19. In the very next verse we read James telling Paul *"...Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law:...* . Seven days later these very same Jews which believed, along with the majority of Jews who didn't believe, joined forces and went about to kill our beloved Apostle Paul! Study out the rest of the 21st chapter of ACTS for yourself and see that these things are so. Had not the Roman soldiers come to Paul's rescue, he would have been killed right then and there. Why do I mention all of this? To emphasize the love of God that needs to be shed abroad in our hearts. Had the disciples at Jerusalem been true to the teachings of Jesus, and the apostles concerning the love of Jesus, they wouldn't have been part of the crowd who was so anxious to kill the Apostle Paul, the former Saul of Tarsus. Who wrote about the love of God that needs to be shed abroad in our hearts? The Apostle Paul in ROMANS 5. By the time Paul is arrested in Jerusalem in ACTS 21, he has already written the book of ROMANS. Let's read a little from ROMANS 5. ROMANS 5:1 *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; 4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope: 5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. 6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. 8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* This truly is the love of God. This goes right along with what the Apostle John wrote in JOHN 3:16 & 17 -- For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten

Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. This also is why 1 JOHN 4:19, which we read above is so important to our lives, and how the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts: 19 We love him, because he first loved us.

Paul and Barnabas Introduced Together

ACTS 9:26 And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. 27 But Barnabas... . Let's say a few words here about Barnabas who became very important in the life of Saul of Tarsus. We first find mention of Barnabas in ACTS 4. ACTS 4:32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any [of them] that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. 33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. 34 Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, 35 And laid [them] down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. 36 And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, [and] of the country of Cyprus, 37 Having land, sold [it], and brought the money, and laid [it] at the apostles' feet. Note the following; Barnabas name meant The son of consolation, that is Son of exhortation, which also means Son of encouragement. Also some translations refer to Barnabas as the Son of comfort, the man of encouragement, and even one translation refers to Barnabas as the preacher. These names are all very fitting of Barnabas. Note also that Barnabas was a Levite, and the Levite was the tribe of Israel in charge of the service of the tabernacle, and helping Aaron and his sons perform their office of a priest. The word "Levite" is found 39 times in scripture, 39 being the number of CHANGE. Interestingly the 39th time the word Levite is used in scripture is in this 36th verse of ACTS 4, where it is used in connection with Barnabas, a man used of God during this change of ages, which took place during Barnabas' lifetime. In our study of the life of Paul we now also find that Barnabas is the one who introduces Saul of Tarsus to the disciples and apostles at Jerusalem, thus changing their perception of him.

ACTS 9:27 But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. We see here that Barnabas became a friend to Saul of Tarsus when no one else would there at Jerusalem. Barnabas took Saul of Tarsus in, thus began a most wonderful long lasting relationship. Barnabas truly showed Saul of Tarsus the love of God. Scripture doesn't tell us how, but know doubt somewhere along the way Barnabas must have come across Saul of Tarsus in Damascus. Ananias of Damascus may have introduced Barnabas to Saul of Tarsus, or Barnabas may have been passing through Damascus one day when Saul of Tarsus spoke in one of the synagogues of Damascus. We are not told how they got aquatinted, but Barnabas no doubt heard Saul of Tarsus tell first hand how that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. {See ACTS 9:20}. Barnabas also knew the story of how Saul of Tarsus had met the Lord on the way to Damascus, and how the Lord had spoken unto him. Thus Barnabas declares to the apostles now in Jerusalem how that Saul of Tarsus had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus, and how Jesus had spoken unto him.

In a previous study we covered the kingdom apostles and the church apostles. The most famous of the kingdom apostles was Peter and John. The first eight chapters of the book of ACTS focuses the attention on these two apostles, Peter being prominent. Additionally ACTS 10 - 12 further focuses attention on the ministry of Peter. We know from ACTS 8:1 that after the death of Stephen: ...there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles. Note those last three words of ACTS 8:1 ...except the apostles. The kingdom preaching apostles stayed in Jerusalem. No doubt Saul of Tarsus was familiar with the apostles, especially Peter and John, for during the