

Living in the Fear of Jesus

International Bible Lesson

Acts 9:19b-31

Sunday, October 11, 2015

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“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” (Acts 9:31—NIV).

The first church was built up and strengthened because of the comfort and encouragement of the Holy Spirit. The first church increased in numbers because the first Christians lived in the fear of the Lord and rightly responded to the leadership and work of the Holy Spirit in their lives. The Bible says that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 9:10). But what does it mean to believe in Jesus as your Savior and live in the fear of Jesus as your Lord? Surely the first Christians respected Jesus enough to obey Jesus in everything, which might be understood as fear of the Lord. They wanted to learn more about Jesus’ teachings and life because they wanted to live like Him and please Him. They knew that Jesus was the all-wise Son of God, and they wanted to live wisely as He did. Because Jesus was not only their personal Lord, but Lord and King of the universe, they knew the potential consequences of disobeying Jesus. If they did not repent of their sins, they knew they could come under the discipline of the Lord and suffer until they returned to obedience. If they persisted in disobedience that might indicate that they had never received Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. The first church was so effective in their teaching about Jesus that many unbelievers became Christians, which brought peace into the church and world. After he came to believe in Jesus, Saul brought peace throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria.

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Thinking Further

1. Name three titles of Jesus that Luke used in this lesson. What do they mean to you personally?
2. If you had been a Jew in Damascus, what are some reasons you could give for believing Saul’s teaching in the synagogue and becoming a Christian?
3. Why do you think the unbelieving Jews wanted to kill Saul?
4. Is it okay for a Christian to flee from persecution sometimes? Give a reason for your answer.
5. If you were a Christian in Jerusalem, what are some reasons you could give for trusting that Saul was a true Christian?