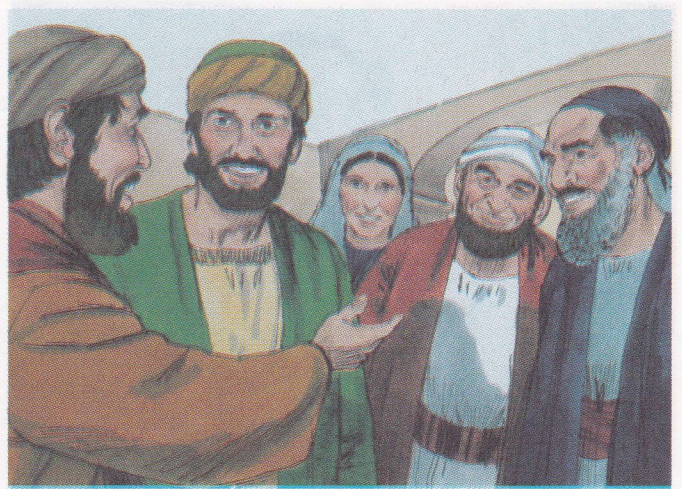


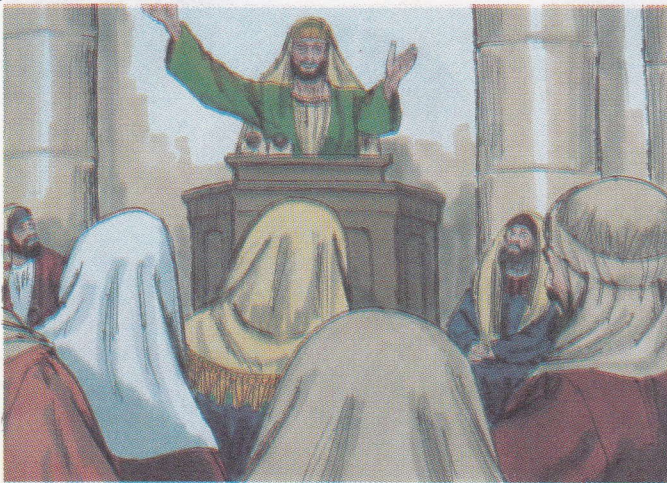
Saul Begins to Preach



1 Saul had begun to persecute the church in Jerusalem, beginning with the stoning of Stephen. Then, on the road to Damascus, the Lord appeared to him. The persecutor became a believer!



2 Saul spent several days with the disciples of Christ in Damascus.



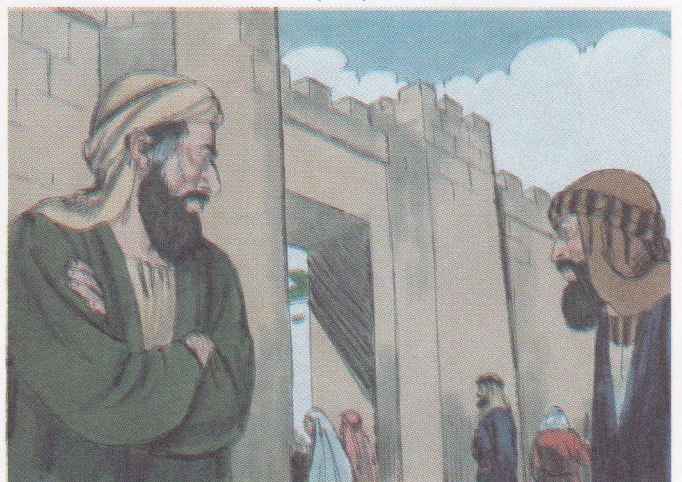
3 Right away he began to preach about Jesus in the synagogues of the Jews. "Jesus is the Son of God," he said.



4 All the Jews who heard him were amazed. They asked each other, "Isn't this the man who persecuted the disciples of Jesus in Jerusalem? Didn't he come here to arrest those people?"



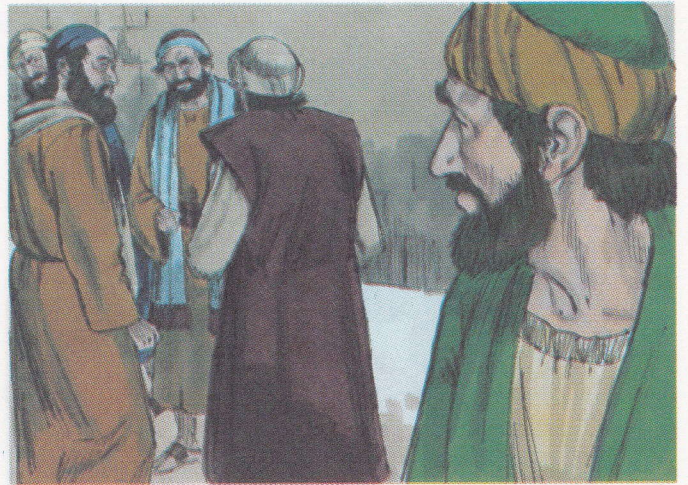
5 Yet Saul grew more and more powerful. His proofs that Jesus is the Christ were so strong that the Jews of Damascus did not know how to answer him.



6 Finally, after many days had gone by, the Jews made plans to kill Saul. They kept a close watch on the city gates day and night, hoping to capture him.



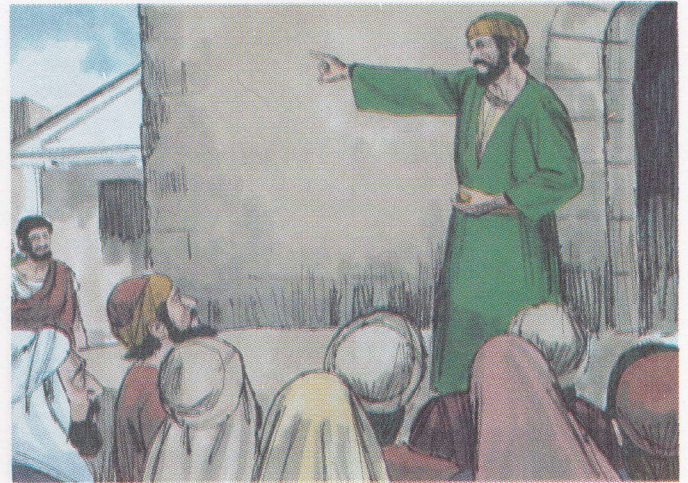
7 But Saul found out about their plot. One night his followers lowered him in a basket through an opening in the wall, and Saul escaped from Damascus.



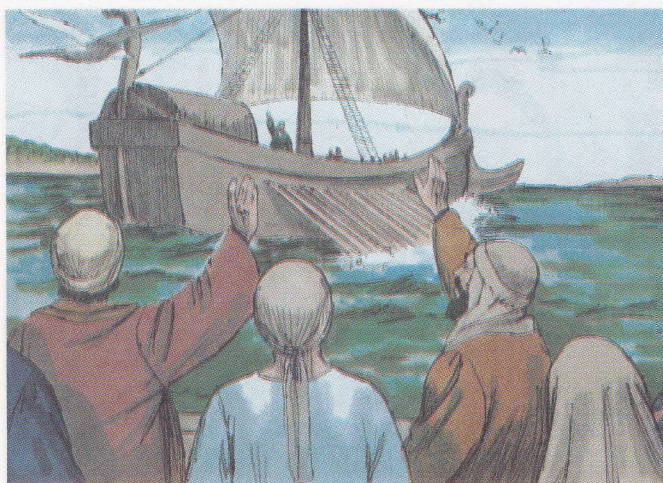
8 He then went to Jerusalem, where he tried to join the disciples. But they were afraid of him. They could not believe that he was a disciple.



9 Then Barnabas helped Saul. He told the apostles how Saul had seen the Lord on his journey. He also told them how Saul had fearlessly preached about Jesus in Damascus.



10 After that, Saul stayed with the disciples and went about Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of Jesus. He debated with the Greek-speaking Jews, but they tried to kill him.



11 When the church learned of this, they took Saul down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus, his home town.



12 Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened and encouraged by the Holy Spirit. And the number of disciples continued to grow.