



THE MESSENGER

SEPTEMBER 4, 2022

NEWS AND NOTES

Congregational Meeting
September 11

Weekly Bible Studies
Tuesday at 1 on Zoom
Friday at 1 on Zoom
Saturday, 10, Panera
(Georgetown)

Times of Service
Sunday

Bible study: 9:45 AM
Worship: 10:45 AM; 6 PM

Wednesday

Bible study: 7:30 PM
(Immediately followed by a
short worship service)

First Friday of Month
Singing

September 2, 7:30

Address and Contact

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Christ
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ARE YOU READY? (2)

Sometimes a violent event will cause people to abandon mob mentality to begin thinking more rationally. The stoning of Stephen had the exact opposite effect. The day Stephen was murdered, persecution erupted in Jerusalem. Christians fled into Judea and into Samaria. It was a dangerous time. This event serves as our introduction to Saul of Tarsus, a young Pharisee fully convinced of the righteousness of his desire to stamp out followers of Jesus.

Acts 7:58 says, *And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul.* These false witnesses were recruited by those who had been disputing with Stephen. Among them were Jews from Cilicia, a province in Asia Minor. I don't think that it is coincidental that Saul is among that group, Tarsus being one of Cilicia's two most important cities. If he was not the leader of that group, he was moving up very quickly. I see his presence at the stoning of Stephen as a position of authority in that he was privileged not to actually throw any stones, but to stand by in approval, watching over the coats of those who did. In fact, Acts 8:1 states that Saul approved of Stephen's execution.

Saul seems to become the central figure of the persecution. *But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison. (Acts 8:3) But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. (Acts 9:1-2).* Saul's persecution of the church came to an abrupt end before he ever reached Damascus. The former persecutor became the most persecuted, enduring hardships like no other Christian of his day.

Of additional note is how quickly he began to be persecuted after he became a Christian. While still in Damascus, *immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God." And all who heard him were amazed and said, "Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem of those who called upon this name? And has he not come here for this purpose, to bring them bound before the chief priests?" But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who lived*

Members Needing Our Prayers

Richelle Banks, The Spivey family, Gary Brown, Joyce Bolton, Julie Patton, Rick Small, Benny Poynter, Richard and Janet Brundige, Rhonda Boyd, Cindy Bradbury, Paul Atkisson

Others Needing Prayer

Charles Bishop, Brian Mason, Ernestine Byers, Glen Perkins, Allison Walker, Dwight Antle, Randy Cates, Larry McTeer, Charlene Michael, Ann Little, Mary Jean Snyder, Mark Nickles, Adam Fusco Duane Harrod, Grace Meyer, Meredith Nicholson, Alice and Lonnie Anderson, Glen Perkins, Ethan Shelton, Terry Daniels, Leroy Weatherholt, Robert Brundige, William Roberts, Paul and Marrian Lyda, Dana and her children, Shane (a relative of Cindi), Ron Harmon

To Our Guests

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in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ. (Acts 9:20-22) Those Jews in Damascus wanted no part of the message that Jesus was the Christ, and conspired to murder Saul. Just a short time before those same Jews would have been happy to assist Saul in his mission to eliminate the Way. No doubt they would have identified Christians and led Saul to their homes. Now those very same Jews conspire to kill him.

Was Saul ready for such persecution? He had to know it was coming. Even so, he did not waver. Escaping the Jews in Damascus, Saul returned to Jerusalem and, with help from Barnabas, began boldly preaching Jesus. His dispute with the Hellenists earned him another group that wanted to kill him. With the assistance of the saints Saul escaped to Caesarea and then on to Tarsus, his home town.

None of us knows when we will personally be persecuted, or how severe that persecution will be. Luke 1:17 delineates the tasks that John would perform in preparing the way for the Savoir. Among those tasks, John was *to make ready for the Lord a people prepared*. 1 Peter 4:15-16 says, *But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.* John Thompson

Elders	Deacons	Evangelist
Troy Antle	Richard Brundige	Adam Litmer
David Collins	Adam Daniels	
	Marcus Lake	
	Adam Litmer	
	Frank Patton	
	Jamie Powell	
	Pat Seabolt	
	Matt Thompson	
	James Weatherholt	

