

# Acts 9:26

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

## Analysis

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**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 Jerusalem church's initial skepticism toward Saul demonstrates appropriate caution while highlighting conversion's radical nature and difficulty of overcoming reputational history.

He assayed to join indicates Saul's initiative in seeking church fellowship. Genuine conversion produces desire for communion with believers, not isolation. The verb join (Greek: kollaō) means to glue or cement together, indicating desire for genuine union with Christ's body, not superficial association.

They were all afraid reveals understandable suspicion—Saul's persecution had traumatized Jerusalem Christians. Fear mingled with doubt: was this elaborate deception to infiltrate and destroy from within? Their caution wasn't faithless cynicism but appropriate prudence given Saul's history.

Believed not that he was disciple shows requiring evidence beyond profession. Reformed theology emphasizes true conversion produces fruit validating profession (Matthew 7:16-20). The church's wariness, while initially excluding genuine believer, demonstrates healthy discernment against false professors. Resolution required credible witness—Barnabas's testimony (Acts 9:27) bridged credibility gap.

## Historical Context

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Saul's arrival in Jerusalem occurred approximately three years post-conversion (Galatians 1:18), around 37 CE. Jerusalem Christians remembered his devastation of the church (Acts 8:1-3)—imprisonments, beatings, Stephen's martyrdom. Saul's reputation as violent persecutor made instant trust impossible.

The church's fear was realistic—Roman authorities and Jewish leaders still persecuted Christians. A infiltrator could identify leaders for arrest. Their caution protected vulnerable community. Barnabas, originally Joseph from Cyprus (Acts 4:36), had established credibility enabling him to vouch for Saul. This illustrates the vital role of established believers bridging credibility gaps for new converts, especially those with problematic pasts.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

## Study Questions

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1. How should churches balance appropriate caution against false professors with welcoming genuine converts?
2. What role do established believers play in vouching for new converts with troubled pasts?
3. In what ways does genuine conversion produce desire for church fellowship despite potential rejection?
4. How should believers with criminal or immoral pasts demonstrate transformed lives to skeptical communities?
5. What distinguishes faithful caution from unforgiving refusal to accept repentant sinners?

## Interlinear Text

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|                        |                     |                   |                  |                   |                  |                   |
|------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Παραγενόμενος          | δὲ                  | ὁ                 | Σαῦλος           | εἰς               | Ἱερουσαλὴμ       | ἐπείρατο          |
| <b>was come</b>        | <b>And</b>          | G3588             | <b>when Saul</b> | <b>to</b>         | <b>Jerusalem</b> | <b>he assayed</b> |
| G3854                  | G1161               |                   | G4569            | G1519             | G2419            | G3987             |
| κολλᾶσθαι              | τοῖς                | μαθητῆς           | καὶ              | πάντες            | ἐφοβοῦντο        | αὐτόν             |
| <b>to join himself</b> | G3588               | <b>a disciple</b> | <b>but</b>       | <b>all</b>        | <b>afraid</b>    | <b>of him</b>     |
| G2853                  |                     | G3101             | G2532            | G3956             | G5399            | G846              |
| μὴ                     | πιστεύοντες         | ὅτι               | ἐστὶν            | μαθητῆς           |                  |                   |
| <b>not</b>             | <b>and believed</b> | <b>that</b>       | <b>he was</b>    | <b>a disciple</b> |                  |                   |
| G3361                  | G4100               | G3754             | G2076            | G3101             |                  |                   |

## Additional Cross-References

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**Acts 26:20** (References Jerusalem): But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.