

Bible Stories for Adults

Saul Converted

Acts 9:1-31

Opening

Gathering: Why does God select sin-filled people to be His ambassadors and do His work?

Today's Focus: In His grace, God called a great enemy of His church to become a great tool of His church.

Key Verses: *This man is my chosen instrument to carry My name before the Gentiles.* Acts 9:15

You will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. Acts 22:-15

Opening Prayer

Lesson

Clothes at the Feet (Acts 7:55-8:1a)

When is the first we hear of Saul?

Acts 7:55-58

Was Saul just a bystander to Stephen's stoning or was he involved in any way?

Acts 7:59-8:1a

What had caused Stephen to get into so much trouble with the Jewish leaders?

Acts 6:9-10, 12

Could Saul have been one of the debaters that opposed Stephen?

Acts 21:39

Did Saul give casual approval to this Christian persecution or did he become an advocate?

Acts 8:3

Why would Saul do this?

Acts 26:9-10

Why would he go to such extremes as arresting and persecuting both men and women?

Numbers 25:1-5

Saul's Teacher (Acts 5:17-40)

What do we know about Saul's upbringing?

Acts 22:3

What do we know about Gamaliel?

Acts 5:27-29, 33-34

Was Gamaliel as staunchly opposed to this group of Jesus followers as was his student Saul?

Acts 5:35-40

A Pharisee Named Saul (Acts 26:4-5)

Why would Saul be so zealous against Christians while his teacher was so careful?

Acts 26:4-5

Why would he have been raised his entire life as a Pharisee?

Acts 23:6

But Gamaliel was a Pharisee. Why was Paul so strongly against the Christians?

Galatians 1:13-14

Was Paul this way due to the rawness of youth or was he honestly trying to please God?

Philippians 3:3-6

Bible Stories for Adults

Saul Converted

Page 2

The Scattered Church (Acts 8)

What happened to this fledgling group of Christians when they were scattered by the persecution?

Acts 8:1b, 4

How well did the gospel spread even though the apostles stayed in Jerusalem?

Acts 8:5, 12

Were the apostles at all involved in this outward expansion?

Acts 8:14, 17, 25

Was this expansion just happening in Samaria?

Acts 8:26-27, 34-35, 38, 40

Anywhere else?

Acts 9:32, 35, 42

Acts 10:24, 44, 48

Looking for the Way (Acts 9:1-2)

Did the persecutors realize that many Christians had moved out of town?

Acts 9:1-2

Why is the church called The Way instead of Christian?

Acts 11:26c

If Christians called themselves The Way, what did the Jews call them?

Acts 24:5, 14a

Did the Sanhedrin agree with Saul's request for letters to the Damascus synagogues?

Acts 22:4-5

Was this trip to Damascus Saul's first (and only) hunting trip outside of Jerusalem?

Acts 26:11-12

Damascus - The oldest still-inhabited city on the world, already ancient in Abraham's days

Now Capital of Syria, Then Capital of Nabatean Arabs, always a choice target for armies

An oasis between Mt. Hermon and Syrian desert, 2000 ft elevation, nice climate

Divided in half by Straight Street which runs east-west; still a major thoroughfare

A mile-long colonnaded street, center road for traffic, wide sidewalks for market

Had a large Jewish population with 30-40 synagogues

I Saw the Light (Acts 9:3-5)

What happened as he got close to the city of Damascus?

Acts 9:3

How bright was this light?

Acts 26:13

What did Saul do when he saw this light?

Acts 9:4-5

Opposing God (Acts 26:14-15)

Why did Jesus say that Saul was persecuting Him?

Luke 10:16

How did Paul come to understand this in an even deeper way?

Ephesians 5:29-30

How did Jesus emphasize that Saul was opposing God?

Acts 26:14-15

Bible Stories for Adults

Saul Converted

Page 3

Sudden Surrender (*Acts 9:6-9*)

Did Saul answer Jesus' question?

Acts 9:6

Did Jesus say anything else to Saul other than to go to Damascus and wait for instructions?

Acts 26:16-18

What did Saul's traveling companions think about what had happened?

Acts 9:7-8 (22:9)

What did Saul do in Damascus and how was it like a death of his old self?

Acts 9:9

God Works Both Ends (*Acts 9:10-19*)

How did God work both ends of His plan for Saul as He did with Peter and Cornelius?

Acts 9:10-12

What did Ananias think about his special calling by God to induct the greatest missionary ever?

Acts 9:13-14

How did God explain to Ananias that he had to go?

Acts 9:15-16

Did Ananias give four other reasons for not going like Moses did (Exodus 3:1-4:17)?

Acts 9:17

What else did he say that isn't recorded here?

Acts 22:12-16

What did Saul think about this Christian coming to him like this?

Acts 9:18-19a

What sight was Saul really given and what scales really fell from his eyes?

2 Corinthians 4:4

Days in Damascus (*Acts 9:20-25*)

What did Saul do over the several days he spent with the disciples in Damascus?

Acts 9:19b-22

Having been a Pharisee and a persecution leader, was Saul effective in bringing Jews to Christ?

Acts 9:23

What happened?

Acts 9:24-25

Was this threat against his life kept secret from the authorities?

2 Corinthians 11:32-33

Arabian Nights (*Galatians 1:15-18*)

Had Saul stayed in Damascus for the entire time mentioned in Acts 9:20-25?

Galatians 1:15-17

How long are the *many* days that Acts 9:23 tells us he spent around Damascus?

Galatians 1:18

Bible Stories for Adults

Saul Converted

Page 4

A Couple of Weeks in Jerusalem (*Acts 9:26-31*)

What congratulations did Saul receive after three years of witnessing around Damascus?

Acts 9:26

Who stepped in on Saul's behalf?

Acts 9:27-28 (4:36-37)

Why didn't Saul stay longer than 15 days in Jerusalem?

Acts 9:29-30

Was Saul just too nervous from his Damascus experience and gave up on Jerusalem too early?

Acts 22:17-21

Did Saul get to meet all of the apostles during his two week stay?

Galatians 1:19-20

Why does Paul point out he only saw these two for 15 days three years after his conversion?

Galatians 1:11-12

Did this independent gospel threaten the church?

Acts 9:31

Antioch (*Acts 11:19-30*)

What did Saul likely do when he got home to Tarsus?

Galatians 1:21-24

After the stories of Peter spreading the gospel outward to Gentiles, what growth does Luke mention?

Acts 11:19-21

Antioch - 3rd largest city in Roman empire (after Rome and Alexandria), over 500,000 population

Called "Antioch-on-the-Orontes" since on Orontes River and there were other Antiochs

300 miles north of Jerusalem, 20 miles east of Mediterranean Sea, 80 miles from Tarsus

What did the mother church in Jerusalem do when they heard of the believers in Antioch?

Acts 11:22-24

What did Barnabas do when he saw that he needed help in this large city?

Acts 11:25-26

Why does this verse say their ministry only lasted a year?

Acts 11:27-30

How long had Saul witnessed around Tarsus and Antioch?

Galatians 2:1

Closing Prayer

Response - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. When have I committed myself to something without first seeking God's will?
(*Acts 9:1-5; 26:9; 1 Kings 22:1-28; Psalm 119:2; Matthew 6:31-33; 7:7-8*)
2. When have I committed myself to something that later was clearly against God's will?
(*Acts 9:1-5; 22:2-8; 26:9-11; Number 16; 1 Samuel 15; 2 Samuel 11-12*)
3. When have I committed myself to something that was clearly in line with God's will?
(*Acts 9:20-22; 22:14-16, 21; 26:15-20; Genesis 6:9; Joshua 24:14-27; 1 Kings 3:4-15; Neh. 1:1-2:9*)
4. What have I recognized to be God's calling for my life?
(*Acts 9:6, 15; 22:14-15, 21; 26:15-20; Exodus 3:10; Deut 31:23; Esther 4:12-16; John 21:15-17*)
5. How have I encouraged others in their ministry? (*Acts 4:36-37; 9:26-28; 11:19-30; 13:15; 15:32; Genesis 14:18-20; Exodus 17:8-18:27; 1 Thessalonians 3:2; 4:18; 5:11; Hebrews 3:13; 10:25*)