

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

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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

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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

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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*)