



Mustard Seed Children's Summary for October 19, 2008

Released on Wednesday, October 15, 2008

"A New Start for Saul"

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Acts 9:1-31

DEVOTIONAL READING: Galatians 1:11-24

MEMORY VERSE: "The Lord, even Jesus...hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 9:17)

SCRIPTURE LESSON TEXT: Acts 9:1-11, 16-19a

- 1** And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,
- 2** And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.
- 3** And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:
- 4** And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?
- 5** And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.
- 6** And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.
- 7** And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.
- 8** And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus.
- 9** And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.
- 10** And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord.
- 11** And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth,
- 16** For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.
- 17** And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou

camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.

18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

19 And when he had received meat, he was strengthened.

OBJECT IN VIEW:

Teach that when a person becomes a believer in Jesus, God gives him new life, new desires, and new goals.

TRUTHS TO STRESS:

1. Saul became a changed person when he trusted Jesus.
2. The desire to please Jesus and make Him known is normal for one who believes in Him as Saviour.

PLANNING LESSON AIDS:

For Telling the Lesson, use felt pens and half sheets of art paper to make simple drawings of a jail (a square building with a barred window), Saul on the ground, a group of men, Saul seated, Ananias, Saul and Ananias, and a cross.

For Helping to Remember, each student will need one sheet of pale green construction paper and crayons. Take a supply of 1/2-by-2-inch self-stick notes.

LESSON BACKGROUND:

Time: A. D. 32

Place: on a road between Jerusalem and Damascus

This week's lesson takes place about two years after the church started on the Day of Pentecost. During this time, the early church had experienced rapid growth as they devoted themselves to teaching and to fellowship. Luke records in the book of Acts the progress of both the gospel and the church. In last week's lesson, we learned about Stephen and six others who were chosen as helpers for the apostles and the church. Stephen would later be stoned and became the first Christian martyr. The people who stoned Stephen to death took off their outer robes and laid them at the feet of a young Pharisee named Saul (Acts 7:58).

Saul, according to Acts 8, went on to persecute many, many more of the early Christians. He made "havoc" of the church in Jerusalem, even dragging people from their homes and putting them in prison (Acts 8:3) and "breathing out threatenings and slaughter" (Acts 9:1).

Many of the Christians fled to different areas to try to avoid persecution. One of these places was Damascus, about 150 miles from Jerusalem, which had a large Jewish population during this time. This week's lesson opens with Saul requesting permission from the high priest to go to Damascus to further persecute Christians who had fled Jerusalem.

TEACHER'S NOTES:

Consider the following as you prepare your lesson for your students:

The life of Saul (Paul) demonstrates some of the changes God makes when a person believes the gospel. After his conversion, Saul found he had new "wants." He now wanted to please Jesus. He now viewed believers as family and wanted to serve rather than persecute them. He also had new goals in life. To make Christ known to others became his passion. Our lesson deals with what initiated these changes—Saul met Jesus on the way to Damascus.

BEGINNING THE LESSON:

Sam had been sure Miss Brown would give him the best part in the school play, but she chose somebody else. You see, sometimes people who are sure they are right are really wrong. A Bible-time man named Saul was like that.

TELLING THE LESSON:

Saul truly wanted to please God. He did many good things. But when Saul found some people saying Jesus was God's Son, he thought, *That is not true! They are wrong to say that.* Of course, it was really Saul who was wrong.

Saul thought, *I am going to make trouble for anyone who preaches that Jesus is God. That will stop them.* So he helped put some people in jail. (Show jail.) He said some other people should be killed. One day he even took helpers and started off to a faraway city (Damascus) to make trouble for Jesus' friends there.

But just before they got to that city, something happened that changed Saul forever. First, a bright light shone down on him from heaven, and he fell to the ground. (Show Saul on ground.) Then a voice spoke to him out of that light. "Saul, Saul, why are you doing things to hurt Me?"

Saul did not know who was talking. "Who are you?" he asked.

The voice said, "I am Jesus, the one you are trying to hurt." (You see, Jesus hurt when Saul hurt one of His people.)

The men with Saul could hear a voice speaking, but only Saul could understand Jesus. (Show men.) So they did not know what was happening.

When the light went away, Saul got up, but he could not see anything. The bright light had made him blind. The men had to help him the rest of the way to the city.

Saul did not even eat for three days after that. (Show Saul seated.) He just kept thinking about what had happened. He kept thinking how wrong he had been about Jesus.

Now over on another street lived Ananias, a man who loved Jesus. (Show Ananias.) The Lord spoke to him in a kind of dream and said, "Ananias, go over to a certain house, and ask for the man named Saul. I have told him someone named Ananias is coming to put his hands on him so that he can see again."

Ananias said, "Lord, I have heard about this man! He has done bad things to Your people, and now he has come to make trouble for us here." (Show jail.)

But Jesus said, "It is all right. Go and do it. I have chosen Saul to be Mine. He will now serve Me."

So Ananias did what Jesus told him. He found Saul, put his hands on him, and said kindly, "Brother Saul, Jesus, the one you saw on your way here, has sent me so that you can see again." (Show Saul and Ananias.)

All at once Saul could see. Right away he wanted to be baptized. That showed others he was now a follower of Jesus. (Show cross.) And that is how one of Jesus' enemies became His friend.

Many new things happened when Saul believed in Jesus. God gave him new, never-ending life. He was in a new family now. It was God's family. Jesus' people were now his friends. He did not want to hurt them anymore. He wanted to help them. He wanted others to belong to Jesus too. More than anything else, now Saul wanted to please the Lord Jesus. Saul was really a new person inside.

Today God still makes people new inside when they ask Jesus to be their Saviour.

TELLING HOW TO LIVE:

Has God done for you the good things He did for Saul? Has He forgiven all your sins? Has He given you never-ending life? Has He put you in His family? Those things do not happen until you trust in Jesus. If you are not sure you have done that, stay after Sunday school, and we can talk about it.

HELPING TO REMEMBER:

Direct the children to draw Saul and the light from heaven; then attach four self-stick notes here and there and print on them "God," "made," "Saul," and "new."

Have each student complete the word search, with key words from this week's lesson.

EXPLAINING THE MEMORY VERSE:

"The Lord, even Jesus...hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 9:17)

Jesus' friend Ananias was kind to Saul. Not long before, Saul had been an enemy, but now they were Christian brothers. Saul would be a different man from now on. He had changed his mind about Jesus. He knew that Jesus really was sent by God to take away our sins and that the Holy Spirit would live in him from now on.

CONCLUSION:

Becoming a Christian is a wonderful event. Saul's conversion was dramatic, and it changed his life forever. God gave Saul a new start. In our lesson today, Saul was committed and determined to persecute, arrest and/or kill every Christian that he found along the way. He was serious about ending Christianity and persecuting everyone who believed in Jesus. But God intervened!

Saul had a personal encounter with the risen Savior that changed what he believed. Blinded by this confrontation, Saul was led into Damascus where he awaited further instructions. Once his eyesight was restored, he confirmed his commitment to Christ by submitting to baptism. He spent the next several days with the disciples at Damascus, enjoying fellowship with the very people he had come to destroy.

Saul is one of the most dramatic examples of the immediate change a person can experience when coming to Christ. No one is ever so bad that God will not accept him/her when they repent and turn to Him. This story of Saul's conversion shows us that no one is outside the reach of God's grace.

PRAYER:

Father God, thank You for the experiences in our lives that bring us closer to You. Help us to use these to trust You more and to draw others to You. In Jesus' name, amen.

ANTICIPATING NEXT WEEK'S LESSON:

Next week's lesson is "Going Out to Serve" and describes the first missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas. Read Acts 13:1-12.

Lesson Summarized by:

Renee Little

Jesus Is All Ministries

www.jesusisall.com

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The Pulpit Commentary, Spence-Jones, H. D. M. (Hrsg.), Bellingham, WA : Logos Research Systems, Inc.

The KJV Parallel Bible Commentary, by Nelson Books.

WORD SEARCH
A New Start for Saul
(Acts 9:1-31)

Find each of the following words.

BLIND

BAPTIZE

HOLY GHOST

HANDS

TARSUS

JESUS

SIGHT

HIGH PRIEST

EYES

PERSECUTE

DAMASCUS

SAUL

LIGHT

DISCIPLES

ANANIAS

L T S E S U C S A M A D D B S Z D S I R A I S U S
L I S R I T A R S U S L D I S C I P L E S C N S T
H H G E H U A S S A H E G S P I O B G P E Z A J C
H N E H I I L E S E H P G G I H S S D E N U A E E
I E P I T R S M I B E S S I S R E L P S L S G S I
L B E O P D P R A R I H S L S S O E E T S U S U P
E H S U N Z B H S M U I M I P E L I U H A P S S E
T L S I H E T E G I R A A C E I H L I G I D A A S
A P L U S I C C R I H O L Y G H O S T I N C Y I I
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C U S I S H I Y T D I E I S U E U D I U E H S P D
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H N C S N E S T H L M C T P N I N H O E H S S A E
S S L S T S L S S T H S E P I R S A D H U O Z S S

