



# ACTS

Of All the Apostles

## **You Will Be My Witnesses:**

**Running the Race**

## **Lesson 20**



# Saul Believes!

Acts 9:1-31

## Supplemental Scripture

Hebrews 12:1-3  
Acts 4:32-37

**NOTE:** Familiarize yourself with this story. Study the supplemental Scripture and make notes on, but do NOT read from, these pages. To reinforce that these ideas are not your own, hold your Bible as you tell the story.

## Memory Verse

Anyone who believes in  
Christ is a new creation.  
The old is gone!  
The new has come!  
2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIRV)

Have you ever run a relay race or competed in a race where the team is more important than any one individual? What do you do when you simply don't like one of your teammates because of something they did in the past? They say they're not like that anymore. Let's see what the early church did when, in the race of a life of faith, they were confronted with just that kind of situation.

## Lesson Goals

Understand that Saul had  
persecuted the church

Understand that when  
confronted by Jesus, Saul  
believed

Understand that Ananias  
and Barnabas accepted  
Saul

Over the past couple of lessons, we've seen the death of Stephen, the persecution of the church by a man named Saul, and the scattering of the church because of that persecution. The race seems to have been all uphill so far. Even so, we did learn about many in Samaria believing because Philip preached the good news of Jesus Christ there.

"Meanwhile, Saul continued to oppose the Lord's followers. He said they would be put to death." (Acts 9:1 NIRV) Saul went to the high priest to get papers that would allow him to go into the synagogues in the city of Damascus. Once he was in the synagogue, he would find men and women who were followers of Jesus and he would take them to Jerusalem as prisoners.

Saul was on his way from Jerusalem to Damascus with the papers he needed when "he was suddenly dazed by a blinding flash of light." (Acts 9:3 MSG) Saul fell to the ground and heard a voice that said, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" (Acts 9:4 NASB) The men traveling with Saul just stood there, unable to speak. They could hear the voice, but they couldn't see anything. Saul wanted to know who was speaking to him. "I am Jesus," he replied. "I am the one you are opposing." (Acts 9:5 NIRV) Saul was instructed to go into the city of Damascus. Once there, he would be told what to do. When Saul stood up, he opened his eyes but couldn't see, so the men traveling with him led him into Damascus. Saul was blind for three days and during that whole time, he didn't eat or drink anything.

It was while Saul was blind and staying in Damascus that God spoke to another man who lived in Damascus. His name was Ananias and he was a believer. God spoke to him in a vision and told him to go to Judas' house. Judas lived on Straight Street. God told him to ask for Saul, the man from Tarsus. God also told him that Saul was praying and had seen

## Application

So, how do you react to the Sauls in your life? When people have mistreated you and persecuted you, but then have been changed by God, do you accept them or reject them?

Maybe you are unsure of your answer because you, too, are an enemy of God the way Saul was. James 4:4 says, "Don't you know that to be a friend of the world is to hate God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God." If this is you, there is good news. You see, God loved each of us, even enemies, so much that He gave us His one and only Son. Whoever believes in Him has the assurance of eternal life. Will you trust in God today?

And if you have already trusted in God, how are you treating others? If God died for them, why should we hold grudges? **Anyone** in Christ is a new creation! Who can you work on accepting this week?

Ananias in a vision. Saul knew that Ananias would come and help him to see again.

But Ananias was afraid. He had heard reports about Saul and all the evil things he had done. Ananias even knew that Saul had come to Damascus to arrest the believers. God let Ananias know something special. He said, "Ananias, go ahead. I have chosen Saul to work for Me. Saul will share the good news to those who aren't Jews. He will share the good news with kings. And he will suffer for me." Then Ananias obeyed God. He went to Judas' house on Straight Street and he put his hands on Saul. Ananias welcomed Saul into the family of believers and Saul was filled with the Holy Spirit. Ananias told him that God had sent him to help Saul see again. And right then, something like scales fell off of Saul's eyes and he could see. Then, Saul got up and was baptized.

Saul stayed a few days there in Damascus. He immediately began to preach. He taught what he had refused to believe before, that Jesus is the Son of God. Everyone was amazed, but while they whispered about his past the Jews planned to kill him. They constantly watched the city gates so they could catch him. But Saul's followers helped him escape by lowering him over the wall in a basket.

Saul went from there back to Jerusalem. When he tried to join the believers in Jerusalem they were afraid of him. But Barnabas, the son of encouragement who had sold land to help the believers, came to Saul's defense. He took Saul to the apostles and shared about his journey and how he had seen the Lord. Saul stayed with the believers and spoke the name of God boldly. Some of the Jews in Jerusalem also tried to kill Saul, so the other believers helped him to safety. "Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. The Holy Spirit gave the church strength and boldness. So they grew in numbers. And they worshiped the Lord." (Acts 9:31 NIV)

## Review

1. What happened to Saul as he traveled to arrest believers in Damascus? (God spoke to him and he was blinded.)
2. What was Saul's response? (He believed.)
3. Did everyone accept him? (No.)
4. What happened? (Ananias and Barnabas accepted him and spoke good for him, but others tried to kill Saul.)

Next Week  
Many Believe  
Acts 9:32-43

# Preschool Lesson

Do you remember when we talked about Stephen's death? Do you remember the name of the man who agreed that he should die? He was the one holding everyone's coats. His name was Saul, and after Stephen's death, Saul mistreated those who believed in Jesus. While Philip was in Samaria and south of there with the Ethiopian, Saul continued mistreating those who followed Jesus. He thought they should die, like Stephen did. Saul wasn't happy mistreating only the believers in Jerusalem, he even went to the high priest to get papers that would allow him to go into the synagogues in the city of Damascus. Once he was in the synagogue, he would find men and women who were followers of Jesus and he would take them to Jerusalem as prisoners.

Saul was on his way from Jerusalem to Damascus with the papers he needed when he was suddenly blinded by a flash of light. Saul fell to the ground and heard a voice. The voice said, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" (Acts 9:4 NASB) The men traveling with Saul just stood there. They couldn't speak. They could hear the voice, but they couldn't see anything. Saul wanted to know who was speaking to him. "I am Jesus," the voice replied. "I am the one you are mistreating." Saul was told to go into the city of Damascus. He would be told what to do when he got there.

While Saul was blind, God sent a believer named Ananias. At first, Ananias had been afraid to go to Saul. He knew about the evil things Saul had done. Ananias even knew that Saul had come to Damascus to arrest the believers. But God let Ananias know something special. He told Ananias that Saul would work for God and share the good news of Jesus Christ. Ananias chose to obey God, even though he had been afraid. Ananias went to where Saul was staying and welcomed him into the family of believers. Ananias told Saul that God had sent him to help him see again, and right then, something like scales fell off of Saul's eyes and he could see. Then, Saul got up and was baptized.

Saul stayed a few days there in Damascus. Right away, he started to preach. He taught what he wouldn't believe before, that Jesus is the Son of God. Everyone was amazed, but some of the Jews planned to kill him. They always watched the city gates so they could catch him. But Saul's followers helped him escape. They put Saul in a basket and lowered him over the city wall.

# Activities

**Memory Verse Activity** - Make origami butterflies. Practice the verse and talk about how a butterfly illustrates the message of the memory verse.

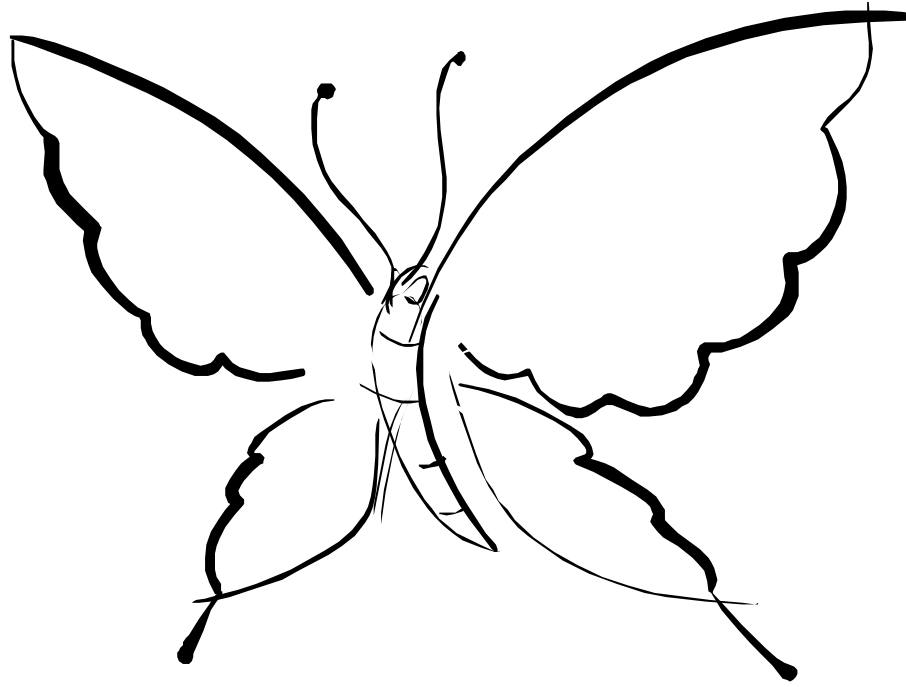
Sing “Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus,” “I Will Run the Race,” “This Little Light of Mine,” and “This is My Commandment.”

Make up a Bible Story Rap to retell the story.

Illustrate booklets from the life of Saul.

Re-enact the story with a flashlight, a blindfold, and a basket.

As you continue memorizing Hebrews 12:1-3, discuss how putting this verse into practice can help us as we accept those who may have mistreated us before.



**ANYONE**

who believes in Christ  
is a new creation.

The old is gone!

The new has come!

2 Corinthians 5:17



# Racing Riddles

Answer the questions below and fill in the blanks in order.  
Then, use the circled letters to finish your memory verse.

1. He persecuted the church after Stephen's death
2. He helped Saul receive his sight
3. For three days, Saul didn't eat or drink \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Once Saul believed, he spoke the Word of God \_\_\_\_\_.
5. He helped Saul in Jerusalem
6. Once Saul was helped to safety, the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of \_\_\_\_\_.

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

A N Y O N E

who believes in Christ is a new creation.

The old is gone! The new has come!

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# Word Search

e b n o b a r n a b q u e n s  
e s t r a i g h t s t r e e t  
t b a p r i z e f g a s e v h  
h p r u n h e t i j a u a a r  
t e k s a b n i e p a c s e e  
o o r a b i s r l u a s a h e  
p i t l a r u a n s e a d m d  
i r i t s s a t i e n m h o a  
a n t e a n l e c n a a t r y  
d h n l e g r f n d a d u f s  
e p e r s e c u t i o n o t i  
t m u e i l e b e a y r a h n  
n q y a w u c e s r e p o g a  
a s t s e d p r e f c h a i n  
e e r t s t h g i a r t s l a

Saul

persecution

Damascus

light from heaven

Straight Street

Ananias

afraid

blind

three days

escape in basket

Jerusalem

Barnabas

# Word Search

e b n o b a r n a b q u e n s  
e s t r a i g h t s t r e e t  
t b a p r i z e f g a s e v h  
h p r u n h e t i j a u a a r  
t e k s a b n i e p a c s e e  
o o r a b i s r l u a s a h e  
p i t l a r u a n s e a d m d  
i r i t s s a t i e n m h o a  
a n t e a n l e c n a a t r y  
d h n l e g r f n d a d u f s  
e p e r s e c u t i o n o t i  
t m u e i l e b e a y r a h n  
n q y a w u c e s r e p o g a  
a s t s e d p r e f c h a i n  
e e r t s t h g i a r t s l a

Saul

persecution

Damascus

light from heaven

Straight Street

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afraid

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Jerusalem

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