

Church of God Sunday School

SAUL'S CONVERSION

Acts 7:59-60; 8:1-4; 9:1-22
Acts 22:3-26; 26:12-18

Stephen, a man of great faith and power, was killed for his belief in Jesus Christ. When Stephen was taken outside of the city to be stoned to death, the men who were about to stone him "laid down their clothes [coats] at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul." Saul was pleased with Stephen's death. Saul thought Stephen and all who believed in Jesus were wrong. Saul wanted to do away with every one of them, if he could!

Saul was a Jew. He was born in the city of Tarsus (*TAHR-suhs*), and he was well educated. Saul was also a Pharisee (*FAIR-uh-see*). He knew the law of Moses well, for he had learned from the great teacher, Gamaliel (*guh-MAY-lee-uhl*).

After Stephen's death, Saul began to work hard to get rid of all the believers of Jesus Christ. He would go into every house where the believers lived and take them off to prison. Because of this persecution, the believers moved to other cities, where they continued "preaching the word."

Saul heard that many believers had left Jerusalem and had gone to the city of Damascus (*duh-MAS-kuhs*). (This city was about 140 miles away, a journey of several days.) Saul asked the high priest for letters giving him permission to look for "any of this way" (believers in Jesus) in the city of Damascus. If he found any, he was to "bring them bound unto Jerusalem" to be punished.

Saul and his men set out on the long road to Damascus. As they neared the city, "suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven," making Saul fall to the ground. He heard a voice say, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Saul said, "Who art thou, Lord?"

The voice said, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks [pricks—a wooden shaft with a sharp spike on one end—were used on oxen when they would try to kick against the plow; 'to kick against the pricks' is an old saying that means 'to rebel against authority']."

Saul was really afraid! Trembling, he said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" The Lord said, "Arise,



and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do."

During all that time, the men with Saul "stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man." When Saul got up, they had to lead him into the city because the Lord had blinded him. His eyes were open, but he could not see!

Saul was in the city for three days without his sight. In all that time he did not eat or drink (this is known as fasting). Instead, Saul prayed and, no doubt, thought much about what he had been doing. He had been fighting against the very God whom he thought he was serving!

Ananias, a believer in Jesus, lived in the city. When the Lord appeared in a vision to Ananias and called his name, Ananias said, "Behold, I am here, Lord." The Lord told Ananias to go and lay his hands on Saul, so that Saul could see again. He told Ananias where he would find Saul. Ananias had heard about the evil things that Saul had "done to . . . saints at Jerusalem."

The Lord assured Ananias that Saul was a changed man. (God had chosen Saul for a great work. Saul would have to suffer many things for the Lord's name.) So, Ananias went to the street called Straight, to the house of Judas, and asked for Saul. Saul was expecting Ananias. God had been preparing him. In a vision, Saul had seen a man named Ananias coming to put his hand on him so that he could see.

Ananias said, "Brother Saul, the Lord . . . that appeared unto thee . . . hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost." When Ananias laid his hands on Saul, it seemed as if scales fell from his eyes. Saul received his sight immediately. After Saul was baptized, he had something to eat. The food gave him strength.

Saul stayed with the disciples at Damascus for awhile. He began to preach in the synagogues (*SIN-uh-*

gogs) that Jesus is the Son of God. People were amazed to know that the same man who had persecuted the believers was now a believer himself. Saul increased in spiritual strength. He "confounded [or puzzled] the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ."

God had worked a complete change in Saul. Remember, at the beginning of this story, Saul was happy to see Stephen stoned to death. Saul worked

hard to get rid of the Christians. Did this stop God from loving Saul? No! God loved Saul so much that He made a special visit to him on the road to Damascus. What great love!

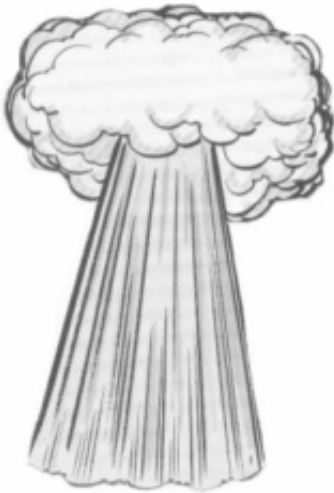
Did you know that God loves you just as much? He wants every boy and girl, man and woman to serve Him. He is doing His best to reach out to you so that you can know Him, love Him, and live for Him.

MEMORY VERSE:

"... he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles . . . and the children of Israel."

—Acts 9:15

WORD SEARCH



H	A	B	S	A	U	L	Q	L	Z	A	H
O	B	V	T	H	R	G	B	E	T	X	I
L	E	D	E	G	E	S	A	T	K	I	G
Y	F	P	P	Y	R	T	Y	T	H	O	H
G	S	C	H	R	I	S	T	E	I	O	P
H	Q	L	E	T	D	V	B	R	N	L	R
O	Z	A	N	A	N	I	A	S	Y	T	I
S	T	R	A	I	G	H	T	J	H	D	E
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FIND THESE WORDS

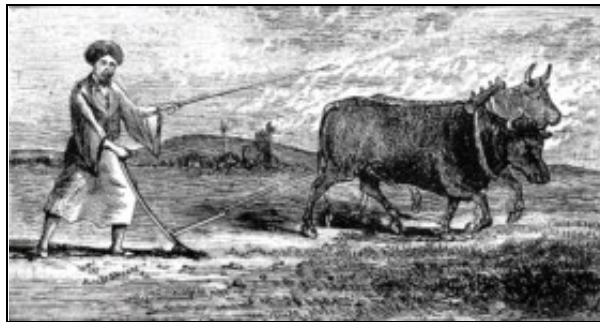
- Holy Ghost
- Christ
- Straight
- Damascus
- High Priest
- Letters
- Saul
- Ananias
- Stephen



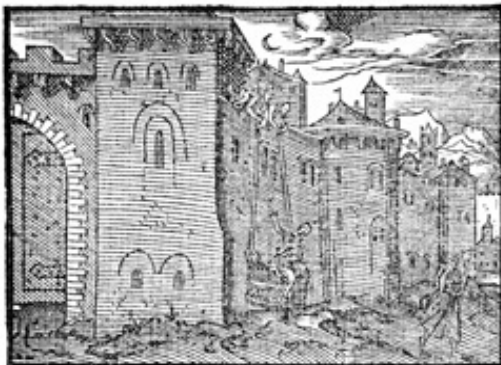
What Am I?

Draw a line from the picture to its correct definition

Letters: these gave Paul permission from the high priest to persecute the Christians in Damascus



A Light From Heaven: this shined around Paul, causing him to fall to the ground



Damascus: a city about 140 miles from Jerusalem that Paul and his men were traveling to



Pricks: a wooden shaft with a sharp spike on one end that was used on oxen when they would try to kick against the plow