



CONVERSION

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ON LINE HELPS FOR THE TEACHER

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Lesson 1

SAUL—A JEW IS CONVERTED

NOTE TO THE TEACHER

Conversion is a complete turning about—turning to God from sin. It is a change which affects heart and life in every area. (Use the outside back cover to illustrate conversion.)

No one is born a Christian. Nor can anyone be educated into Christianity. One cannot be made a Christian by baptism or any religious ceremony. To become a Christian and be assured of eternal life in Heaven, a person must be genuinely converted—completely turned about.

Every unconverted soul is a sinner in the kingdom of darkness, under the power of Satan and on the way to hell. (See John 3:18-19; Acts 26:18; Ephesians 5:8; Colossians 1:13; 1 Peter 2:9.) When that individual turns to Jesus Christ and receives Him as Lord and Saviour, he is no longer in Satan's kingdom of darkness. Instead he belongs to the kingdom of God's dear Son.

Saul was converted on his way to Damascus. When the light from Heaven shone on him and the voice spoke to him, immediately he cried, "Who are You, Lord?" And, a moment

later, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" No one "can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:3). Since Saul used the name "Lord" on the Damascus road, we believe he accepted Christ Jesus the Lord at that time. (See also Romans 10:9-10.)

When Saul responded to the voice of Jesus, it was as if he said, "Lord, from now on I am Yours. I belong to You. You are my Lord. What do You want me to do?" From the moment of his conversion he was ready to yield himself wholly to the One who died to redeem him. He was completely turned about.

A map appears on pages 16 and 17. We have included the places named in these lessons. You may wish to add the names of other areas Paul visited during his early ministry. (See Acts 13-16.) The map will help your students to appreciate the extent of Paul's efforts. (In volume 17, *Service*, we shall continue to study Paul's missionary journeys.)

Encourage your students to point on the map to the places as they are named in the lesson.

Scripture to be studied: Acts 8:1-3; 9:1-22; 22:1-16; 26:4-20

The aim of the lesson: To show that at Saul's conversion he turned about completely and served the Lord.

What your students should know: One must turn to God—to be converted—to have the joy of sins forgiven.

What your students should feel: A desire to have their sins forgiven.

What your students should do: Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God and receive Him as Saviour.

Lesson outline (for the teacher's and students' notebooks):

1. Saul imprisons the Christians (Acts 8:1-3; 22:1-4; 26:4-11).
2. Saul hunts the Christians to capture them (Acts 9:1-2; 22:5; 26:11-12).
3. The Lord speaks to Saul (Acts 9:3-19; 22:6-16; 26:13-18).
4. Saul preaches about Jesus (Acts 9:20-22; 26:19-20).

The verse to be memorized:

Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven. (Matthew 18:3)

THE LESSON

Saul was a proud man who had been born in Tarsus (the capital city of Cilicia). As a boy he had learned the Greek language and the customs of the Greek people. But his Hebrew parents wanted him also to have a good Jewish education. So they sent Saul to Jerusalem to be taught by Gamaliel, a wise teacher. Saul listened carefully to the instructions of this much respected doctor of religious law. He learned the Jewish laws, obeyed them and became a strict Pharisee. Saul believed, as did the other Pharisees, that the way to Heaven was earned by obeying the Jewish laws.

At this time Saul also became acquainted with some Christians. But he did not agree with them. Indeed, he despised them! Saul had never seen the Lord Jesus, but he had learned much about Him. He knew that the Christians referred to Him as the Son of God. Saul had heard of Christ's crucifixion. He doubtless thought to himself, *Jesus is dead. Why, then, do His followers keep on teaching about Him?* When Saul heard the Apostle Stephen preaching about Jesus, he agreed that Stephen should be killed. So when Stephen was stoned, Saul guarded the coats of the men who hurled the stones.