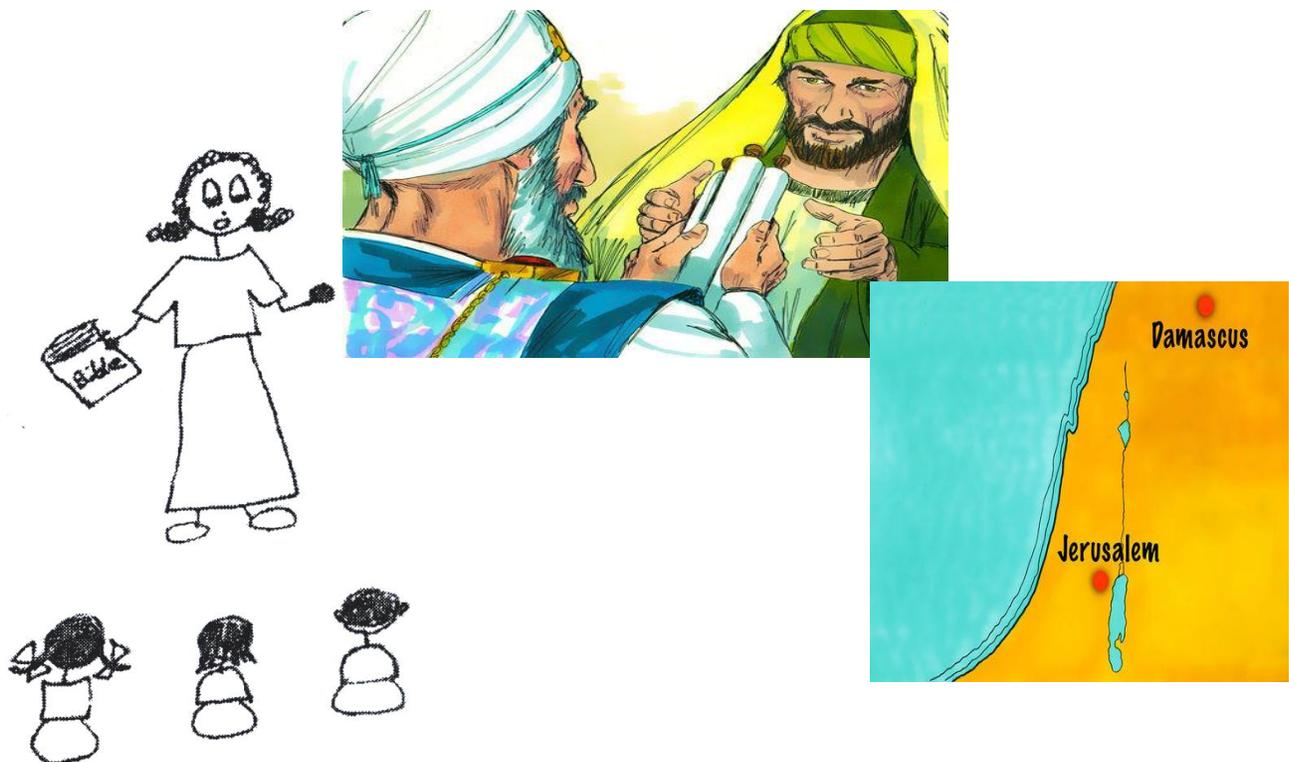


Saul, a Persecutor of Christ
Becomes
Paul, a Servant of Christ

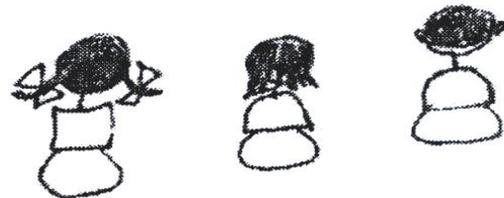
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At first, Saul of Tarsus did not believe in Jesus Christ as his Savior. In fact, he hated Jesus Christ and those who believed in Him. Saul thought that it was his duty as a good Jew to capture and kill believers in Jesus! The high priest in Jerusalem gave Saul letters. They were written to the synagogues, Jewish places of worship, in Damascus. The letters said that Saul had permission to bring back to Jerusalem any one who belonged to the Way. At that time, the Way is what they called the Christians.

Acts 9:1-2 Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

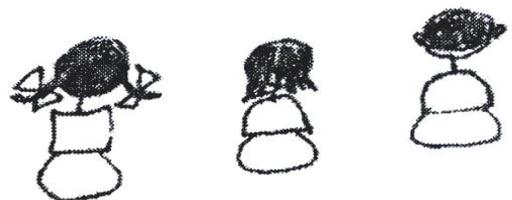


So, Saul took his letters and started on his journey to Damascus. He was on his way to get Christians to persecute. God had other plans for Saul. He met Saul on the road to Damascus and "suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, **"Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"** And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" And He said, **"I am Jesus whom you are persecuting."** Acts 9:3-4



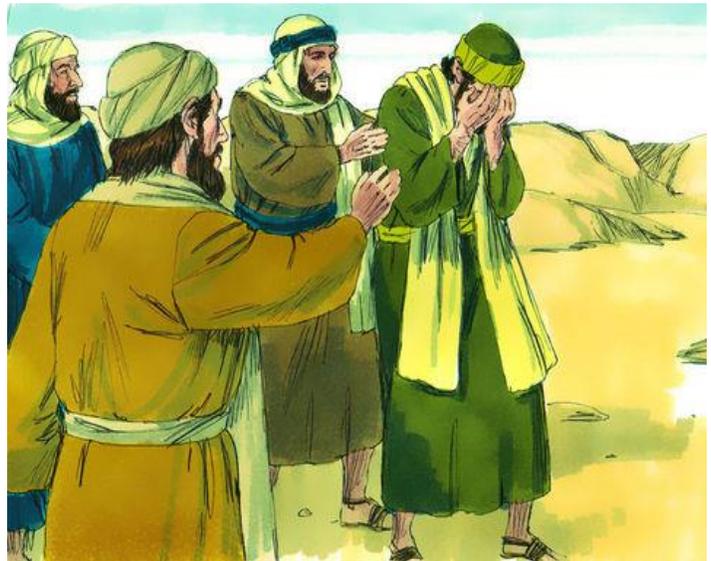
What a surprise that must have been to Saul! The one he was persecuting, Jesus Christ, stopped him while he was on his way to Damascus to torture more Christians! Jesus did not scold Saul; He just asked him why he was persecuting Him. You can see that Saul did not give an answer to that question. Jesus already knew but He wanted Saul to realize what he was doing. He told Saul to get up. He had plans for him. Instead of persecuting believers, Jesus wanted Saul to tell others about Him so they could become believers!

"But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you." Acts 26:16

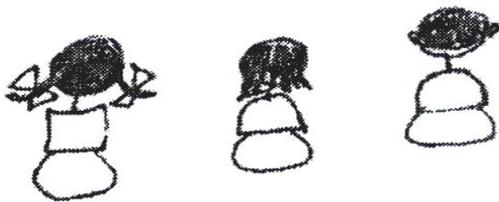


God chose Saul not because of any good thing which he had done. Saul was made a servant of Jesus Christ by the grace of God. This means that Saul did not deserve what God gave him and he did not work for it; God freely gave it to him. Saul knew that he was a sinner. He thought of himself as the worst sinner of all because of how he had persecuted Christians. God knew Saul would be a good example of His forgiveness since he had been forgiven soooo much. He knew that Saul would teach others about Jesus Christ and how to have forgiveness of sins.

1 Timothy 1:15. It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost [worst] of all.

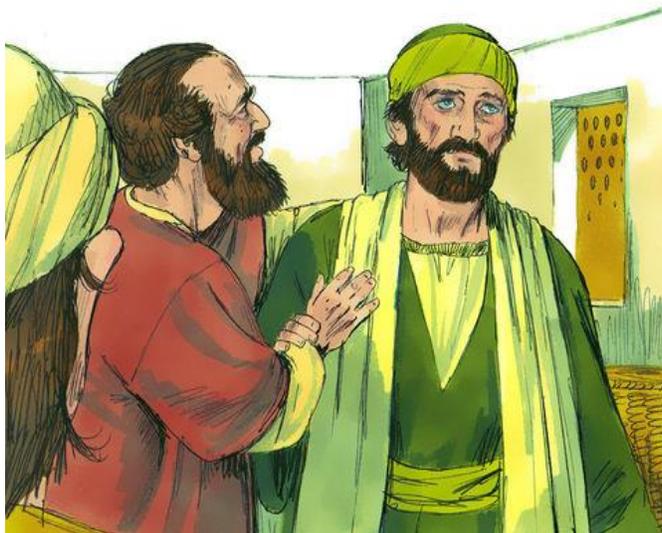


When Saul stood up he couldn't see.



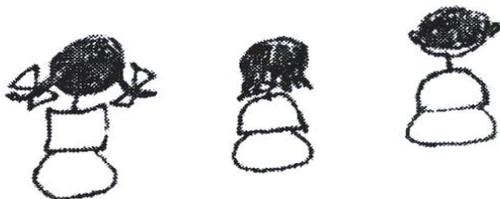
After hearing the voice of Jesus, Saul got up but he couldn't see. His traveling buddies took him to Damascus where he was to meet Ananias, a disciple of Jesus. God had told Ananias to go to where Saul was, at Judas' house, and to heal his blindness. Ananias was afraid to go to Saul because of how he had persecuted Christians! God told Ananias that it would be alright; nothing would happen to him.

So Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." Acts 9:17



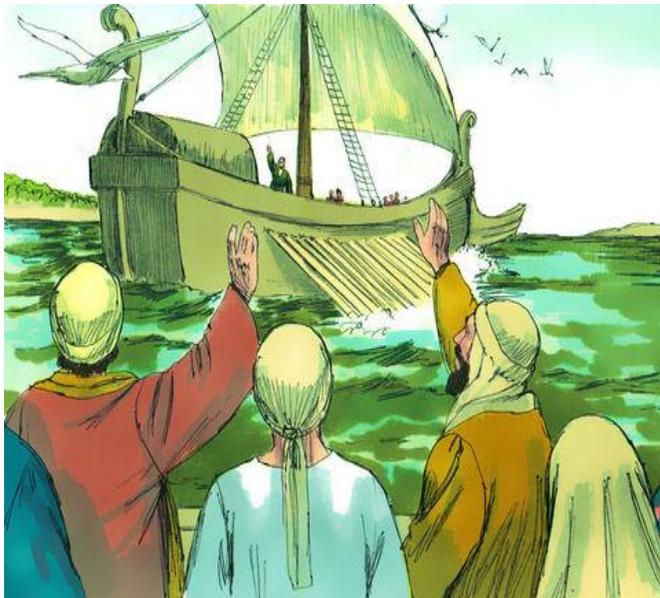
So God did restore Saul's sight. Then through the power of the Holy Spirit Saul became a strong supporter of Jesus Christ. He preached in the synagogues saying that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Those who heard him couldn't believe that Saul, the one who persecuted Christians, was saying this.

All those hearing him continued to be amazed, and were saying' "Is this not he who in Jerusalem destroyed those who called on this name [Son of God] ,and who had come here for the purpose of bringing them bound before the chief priests?" Acts 9:21



Saul, who became known as Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, was used by God to spread the Gospel and teach about Jesus Christ. He journeyed to many places. Because of what he was teaching, he was imprisoned, beaten, stoned and often in danger of death! He suffered shipwreck, hunger and cold. This did not stop him from teaching about the Lord, Jesus Christ. The power and grace of God got Paul through all of his difficulties. God made a way for Paul from being a persecutor of Christians to being a servant of Jesus Christ!

But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain, but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me. 1 Corinthians 15:10



The Apostle Paul is an excellent example of what God in His grace can do for us. We are all sinners, but because we have believed in Jesus Christ as our Savior our lives have been changed! Because Paul believed in Jesus Christ his life was changed. God does the changing! The moment we believe we are made new creatures in Jesus Christ! We have eternal life! One day we will be in Heaven with Jesus Christ! Amazing grace!

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

