

## Acts 9:1-31 Bible Study

1. Do you ever feel that certain people could never become Christians? If so, what are the characteristics of such people?

*Eg zealous for other religion, strong-willed, self-reliant, proud, etc*

2. Read Acts 9:1-2. Describe Saul from these verses and 7:58b-8:1a, 3.

*Eg Zealous, religious, sure he's doing God's work (see Jn 16:2), passionate, confident, connected, resourceful, initiator & proactive, dangerous!, etc.*

3. Read Acts 9:3-9. What are the similarities and differences with Saul's experience and the experiences of Moses and Jeremiah in Ex 3:1-6, Jer 1:4-10?

**Similarities:** *God interrupts their life, he speaks, he commissions them, they instantly know their place before the Lord (ground! Humility in need of grace & mercy)*

**Differences:** *Saul doesn't know who this "Lord" is! Moses and Jeremiah aren't pictured as opponents of God*

4. How was Saul persecuting Jesus, v5? Read the follow: Matt 10:40, 42, 18:5-6; Luke 10:16; John 13:20; Rev 1:12-13 & 20. Discuss how these verses can encourage us in the face of opposition for being Christian. How might they help shape our prayers for ourselves and for Christians facing persecution in other places?

*The Lord is with his people and shares our experiences. When we are treated a certain way purely because we are Christian, the other person is actually showing what they think of Jesus (and how they'd treat him if he was there!). There is great encouragement in this, though we need eyes of faith to see and remember it.*

5. Read Acts 9:10-19. What new information from the Lord do we learn in these verses?

*Saul is now the Lord's Apostle, he will proclaim his name before Gentiles and Jews, and he will suffer persecution for the name of Jesus. Saul is to receive the Holy Spirit too. He will see again – possibly meaning spiritual sight as well cf John 9:39-41.*

6. Why do you think the Lord used Ananias and not just deal with Saul directly?

*We can only guess – but perhaps it was to humble him. He now needed the very people he was there to arrest in order to see and regain strength. Also to immediately involve Saul in the life of the church – even as Apostle to the Gentiles, he is not a lone agent! Also, the Lord is dealing with Saul, in one sense, directly – cf Q4.*

7. Read Acts 9:19b-31. How would you describe Saul now? What has changed since 9:1-2? Are any things the same?

*There is a humility in him now and he persuades people rather than forces their responses (cf 2 Cor 5:11), he is still passionate and resourceful, still proactive, but no with the gospel rather than persecution!*

8. Read the following passages. How did Saul's conversion experience influence him in the years that followed?

1 Cor 15:3-11

Gal 1:11-24

1 Tim 1:12-17

9. How can Saul's conversion encourage us?

*Who is beyond Christ's ability to save? Many of the things we see and assume make someone 'too hard' would have been true of Paul – but 1 Tim 1:16! And the Lord will use anyone he chooses to carry out his will – pray for the grace to never limit what we think Jesus can do!*