



BIBLE RADIO PRODUCTIONS

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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A2085 ~ Saul Preaches Christ.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

The city of Damascus is considered to be the oldest, continuously lived-in city in the world which has never been completely destroyed. Damascus is located about 135 miles or 220 kilometres northeast of Jerusalem and is first mentioned in the Bible in Genesis, Chapter 14. However, Damascus was conquered many times by countries as far away as Egypt and Greece, and at the time of Jesus Christ, was being ruled by the Romans.

In present-day time, Damascus is the capital of Syria and has become a hotbed of terrorist groups in recent years. Reports almost daily in the world news cover the events of a civil war being waged there, and how outside countries provide one warring side or the other with the very latest in military technology and hardware.

Christian groups who watch for the fulfilment of Bible prophecy watch Damascus closely. In Isaiah, Chapter 17, there's a prediction that Damascus will be totally destroyed. A number of Syrian cities east of the Jordan River will also be deserted and only animals will live there after that. This future period of time will also be very difficult for Israel.

In today's *Bible Adventure*, Saul of Tarsus was fasting and praying after being blinded by Jesus Christ on the way to persecute Christians in that big city.

DRAMA - [The Bible In Living Sound.](#)

After three days and nights in the house of Judas, Saul was given a vision of a man named Ananias coming to him and laying hands on him to receive his sight again. Who was Ananias? He was a devout Christian who had a good reputation with the Jews in Damascus. Ananias also had a vision in which the Lord told him to go to the place where Saul was staying, but Ananias protested about going to Saul because of his past behaviour toward Christians.

How gracious the Lord Jesus is to let us have a 2-way conversation with Him! Jesus explained to Ananias that Saul was His chosen person to witness for Him to the Jews and Gentiles. From the beginning of Saul's conversion, he received a mission from God to go throughout the immediately known world and share the Gospel.

In later years whenever Saul visited a new city, he followed a pattern of going to the Jewish synagogue first. He preached Jesus to the Jews before preaching to the other people there. It's understandable that he hoped to make the Jewish people, who were already acquainted with the Scriptures, to understand the true Messiah role of Jesus, the Suffering Servant. Those who became Christians would help Saul to teach Christ to the pagans and idol worshippers from other religions.

Saul had inflicted great suffering on the Christians and in time, he would also suffer. As recorded in Acts, Chapter 9, Ananias obeyed the Lord and went to Judas's house where Saul received his sight again. Ananias told Saul what he had heard from the Lord in the vision. Saul would be Christ's chosen person to preach the Gospel to all people. The Lord Jesus had said the same thing to Saul Himself on the Damascus Road. This made Saul certain that Jesus had indeed appointed him to be His apostle.

What an amazing change Saul's conversion brought him! How could one of Jesus' fiercest enemies change into one of His chosen apostles? Every single person who turns from their sinful ways and lives for Jesus must demonstrate changes that prove true repentance in their lives. If they don't or if other people can't see any change of God's influence in their lives, then there is a question as to whether or not the person has truly converted.

Sometimes when a testimony of how someone was converted is given, the person might dwell on how sinful they were before coming to Jesus. While this might thrill the audience, we have to ask: does this necessarily bring glory to God? Unfortunately, sin and sinning can easily be exalted more than giving the Lord's salvation praise. There's always a temptation to exaggerate or boast about our past when we should focus on the new life the Lord Jesus has graciously provided.

For many people who become Christians, they haven't robbed a bank, nor have they done drugs or bashed up someone. So what do they have to talk about when giving their testimony to other people? Change in their lives doesn't seem to be as obvious as it was in Saul's. When there's a big expectation that change should be easily seen, a person may want to emphasize some things in their lives that'll impress others.

But God gave his Son for us so that we can be justified or made right with Him. Jesus died on the cross, separated from His Father, bearing the full weight of God's anger so that we can be accepted by God. When we try to prove ourselves by our own good works, we're saying in effect, that the cross wasn't enough to pay for our sins. We don't do good works so that we can be saved; we are saved and demonstrate this by doing good works of holiness.

A new believer in Christ must recognise that all sin in their life is pardoned through the cross, which brings a cleansing of sin from their life. Purity and holiness are the desired changes but must always start from the heart. Holiness doesn't mean adopting new behaviours, activities or disciplines. Holiness is being set apart for and to know God; it creates new affections, desires and motives that lead to changes to the new believer's behaviour.

If the new believer doesn't see their sin as being completely pardoned, they'll aim to prove themselves to God rather than fully desiring to know God's forgiveness in their heart in the place of sin. It's possible to change one's behaviour but still have wrong motives and desires inside, which is no more pleasing to God than the old behaviour was.

For example, consider a young Christian who goes to a prayer meeting to impress people in the church, or feel good about themselves, or to avoid a friend's rebuke. Their behaviour of attending collective prayer has changed but the inner motives and reasons for going remain unchanged. God doesn't consider this holiness.

We do good deeds and obey God's commandments as expressions of our love for the Lord and do so by His empowering grace. We don't do good deeds from a motive that Jesus will one day give us a reward for our efforts. The Bible often talks about the giving of rewards now and in the future, but real reward, the pearl of great price, the greatest treasure of all, is God Himself. We take joy of knowing and pleasing God whom we love and delight in.

When in a right relationship with God, we soon discover the delight of knowing and serving Him in everything. Growth in godliness begins with faith in the great and precious promises God gave us at the time of our conversion. If a Christian becomes ineffective and unproductive after a while, this is the result of forgetting the new identity in Christ and all past sins are forgiven and gone. We don't have to worry about proving ourselves any longer, because Christ is our perfection and purifier. If we try to prove ourselves, then we put ourselves back into slavery to the law and self-attainment, and this directly undermines the grace and hope that we've received.

Christians should expect to be in a lifetime process of change into Christ's likeness. There are new problems and troubles at every stage of life but these should increase our prayer life, strengthen our dependency on Him and growth into a Christlike identity. We became Christians by faith in Jesus; we stay Christians by faith in Jesus, and we grow as Christians by faith in Jesus Christ. There is no other way! Jesus is truly the way to God!

Saul's background of living a life of strict law-keeping changed when he discovered that a rules-based righteousness is not really righteousness to God at all. He repented of his own style of righteousness so that in its place, he could receive the righteousness that comes from God by faith. Without this inner transformation, we can never please God.

We need to remember that behind every sin is a lie. In Romans, Chapter 1, it says that people are given over to sinful desires because they exchange the truth of God for a lie. Each time we don't trust God's Word, we're believing in something else, which is always a lie. For example, if a person gets stuck in a traffic jam and they start to get angry, it is because they aren't trusting God and they give way to fear. They believe the lie that God isn't in control or that God doesn't care for them. True freedom is embracing God's reign over our lives and trusting that His reign is wise and good.

The Lord Jesus gives us peace by giving us the Holy Spirit as our Comforter and Counsellor; the Holy Spirit points us to God's gracious promises. Jesus never promised any believer in Him that they would have an easy life. The prediction God gave for Saul of Tarsus's future Christian life was one of troubles and struggles. But despite difficult circumstances, we don't need to have troubled hearts, because we have the Holy Spirit to remind us of God's truth.

The Bible is clear that God uses suffering to make us like Jesus. We can rejoice in this fact when we understand the connection between suffering and growth. The source of all human behaviour and emotions is a person's inner self or as we say, their 'heart'. To permanently change our behaviour, we must let our heart be changed by the Lord Jesus.

In this lifelong process, we can help ourselves in moments of struggle by quoting Scripture verses like this one from Psalm 103: "Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits." When temptations come, you can say out aloud: "God is all I need. You, Lord, are all I need." "Is this from you God? If not, I cast it away in the Name of Jesus Christ!" One victory over temptation always helps when the next one arrives, and this is the type of change we desire: to overcome the world and know God in our hearts intimately.

Saul's conversion was dramatic: in just three days, he had gone from being an aggressive enemy of Christ's to become His greatest apostle. Who can explain such a drastic change in Saul's life? Obviously, Saul met the living and glorified Christ on that road to Damascus. There is no other explanation. Saul's conversion is proof that Jesus Christ did indeed rise from the dead and is alive today.

Is there anyone who thinks he is too sinful and evil to become a follower of Christ? Let him remember Saul. Jesus can change anyone – even the worst type of sinner on earth, whom Saul said it was he.

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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