

## THE LIGHT FROM HEAVEN

Acts 8:1-4; 9:1-31.

### LESSON 128 -- Primary Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:15).

#### BIBLE TEXTS

##### Acts 8:1-4;

1 And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.

2 And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.

3 As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.

4 Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.

##### Acts 9:1-31

1 And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,

2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:

4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

7 And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.

8 And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus.

9 And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.

10 And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord.

11 And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth,

12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.

13 Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem:

14 And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.

15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:

16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.

18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

19 And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus.

20 And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.

21 But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?

22 But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.

23 And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him:

24 But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him.

25 Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket.

26 And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.

27 But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.

28 And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem.

29 And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him.

30 Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.

31 Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.

### **Persecutes Christians**

When Saul of Tarsus was but a boy, he went to Jerusalem to study. There he had a very good teacher. Saul worked hard at his lessons. When he was grown he was one of the best educated men at that time. He studied the Jews' religion. He believed in the Law of Moses, and he thought the new religion of Jesus would destroy this Law, which God gave to Moses. He did not love Jesus nor believe in His teachings. He wished to be rid of all Jesus' friends. He did many cruel things to them. Some were put in jail and some were beaten.

The chief priests and scribes were glad to have such an earnest young man as Saul help them to get rid of the Christians. These followers of Jesus were treated so badly that they no

longer went to the Temple to worship. They even hid themselves away to read God's Word and to pray.

### **Christian Religion Spreading**

About this time news came to Jerusalem that the religion of Jesus was spreading into other cities. Instead of destroying it, the enemies were only scattering it farther, and causing it to grow faster than before.

When Saul heard of this he was more determined than ever. Perhaps he thought: I will stop this new religion yet! He rushed to a high priest, and asked permission to go to Damascus. He wanted to search among the Jews for the followers of Jesus. Saul planned to bind them as prisoners and bring them back to Jerusalem. He thought he was doing a good work.

The high priest wrote letters to the rulers of the places of worship in Damascus. He told them to help Saul find the Christians who might be in that city. He wanted them punished.

### **Going to Damascus**

Saul took these letters, and with some friends quickly started on the long journey to Damascus. The road they travelled led north from Jerusalem and passed through many small villages and town. By and by they came near to Damascus, a Gentile city, where a number of Jews believed in Jesus.

Messengers from Jerusalem had already reach Damascus, warning these Christian followers of Saul's work and his cruel treatment of them in Jerusalem. They were also told that he was soon coming to Damascus with letters and papers, commanding that every believer in Jesus should be punished or put in prison. The believers wondered what they should do. They feared the anger of this proud young man.

### **A Great Light**

On and on Saul and his friends came. Just as they were nearing the great walls of Damascus, suddenly they stopped. A light from the sky brighter than the shining noonday sun struck Saul. He fell to the ground. And with the light came a voice from Heaven, saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Saul was greatly surprised. He thought he was doing right by harming the believers in Jesus. He cried out, "Who art thou, Lord?" Jesus answered, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." Like a flash of lightning across the sky, Saul remembered how cruelly he had treated men and women who worshipped Jesus. He saw how wicked he had been. Then he was sorry for all the bad things he had done. He said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

When a person sees the sinful things he has done and is sorry for them, he asks Jesus to help him and show him what he must do. The Lord told Saul to go into the city of Damascus and there it would be told him what he should do. Saul's friends who were with him were much surprised, too, for they heard the Voice, but saw no one.

### **Days of Darkness**

Saul arose from the ground, opened his eyes, but he could not see. His friends led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. Here they took him to the house of a man whose name was Judas, and left him there.

Saul sat in darkness for three days. He could not see. He neither ate nor drank. No doubt in those days of darkness he thought of many things. Perhaps he thought of every Christian he had mistreated. We feel sure that he must have remembered especially dear Stephen, the very first Christian who gave his life for Jesus. No doubt he remembered how Stephen prayed, when he cried with a loud voice, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Stephen was stoned to death, yet he prayed for those who stoned him. He asked God not to remember, nor to hold this sin against them. All these things made Saul sad in his heart. He saw himself a very wicked man. He began to pray. That is what every one must do to be saved.

### **Two Visions**

Jesus helps us when we pray. He helped Saul. He gave him a vision. In the vision, he saw a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hands on Saul, so that he could receive his sight.

And it was true, there was in the city of Damascus a Christian named Ananias. Ananias also had a vision from God. In his vision he heard God's voice saying, "Ananias." Ananias

answered, "Behold, I am here, Lord." Then the Lord said, "Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, and hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight."

Ananias wondered why the Lord would ask him to do this for such a wicked person. Ananias told the Lord how he had been warned about this man. He told the Lord that Saul mistreated the Christians in Jerusalem and that he was come to Damascus to do the same thing there. The Lord told Ananias that he did not need to be afraid of Saul. He said He had chosen Saul to work for Him.

Ananias was no longer afraid. He not only obeyed the Lord but he forgave Saul for all the wicked things he had done. He went to the home of Judas and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost." He prayed for Saul and Saul was no longer blind. Is it not sweet to think that when Jesus forgave Saul and called him to serve Him, Ananias forgave him too, and called him "Brother Saul"?

### **A New Heart and a New Name**

Now Saul could see, and he rose and was baptized. The Lord gave Saul a new heart and a new name, for we learn that later the Lord changed his name to Paul. After the Lord changed Saul's heart, no longer did he hate anyone. Now he wanted to do the things that would please Jesus. His friends brought food to him; and when he ate it, strength came back into his body. And Paul began to preach about this same Jesus he had persecuted. Many people came to hear him preach about Jesus, the Saviour of men, and a great many were saved through Paul's work.

## **QUESTIONS**

1. Where were Saul and his friends going? Acts 9:3.
2. What did he see in the way? Acts 9:3.
3. Why did Saul's friends have to lead him by the hand? Acts 9:8.
4. How many days was Saul blind? Acts 9:9.
5. On what street in the city of Damascus was Saul staying? Acts 9:11.

**LESSON RESOURCES**

**TITLE**

**THE LIGHT  
FROM HEAVEN**

Lesson 128

Acts 8:1-4; 9:1-31

MUSIC

# Heavenly Sunshine

WATCH & PRAY 42

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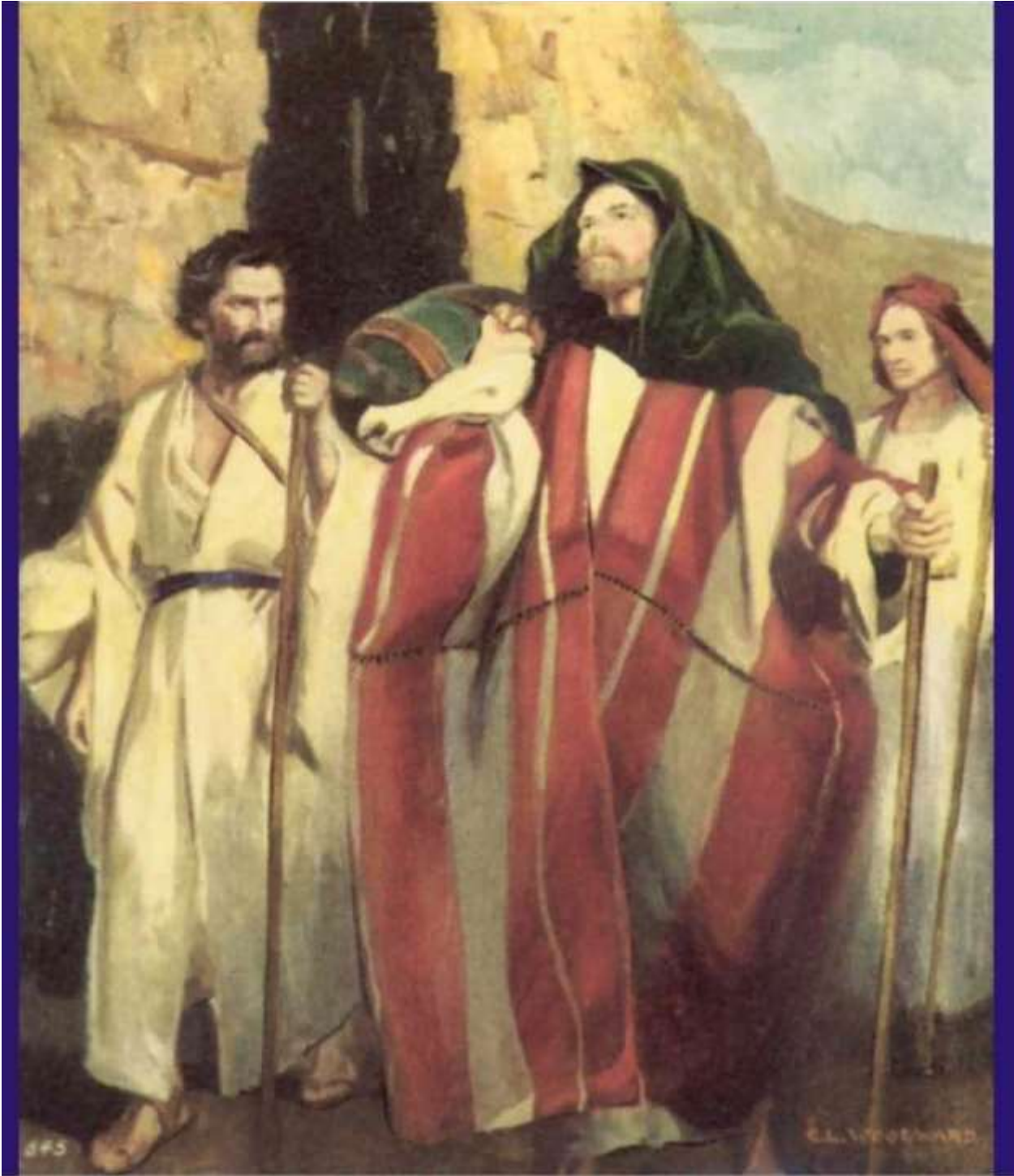


**SONG**

## **Heavenly Sunshine**

**Heavenly sunshine,  
Heavenly sunshine,  
Flooding my soul with glory divine  
Heavenly sunshine,  
Heavenly sunshine  
Halleluja! Jesus is mine.**

PICTURE 1





**PICTURE 2**

