

**LESSON #96 – THE CONVERSION OF THE APOSTLE PAUL**

*Acts 9:1-31*

Today's lesson tells of one of the most wonderful things which ever happened. You might remember that a man named Saul was persecuting the church, throwing believers into prison and even killing some of them. He had been there when Stephen was stoned. He was a Jew, a Pharisee. He hated those who believed in Jesus. He was an evil man. Maybe you know someone who is not nice; who is always fighting with people and who does not worship God. Well Saul thought that he was doing this for God. He did not believe in Jesus. He did not believe that Jesus was really God and he thought that those who believed in Him were worshipping another god. What do you think that God should do with a man like this? Let's see what God did!

Saul was on his way to a town named Damascus so that he could find believers there and bring them back to Jerusalem and throw them into prison. As he got close to Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him and he fell to the ground. Then he heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus," the voice said. "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

Yes, it was Jesus who was speaking to Saul from heaven. He had plans for this man who persecuting His church. He was going to use Saul to make His church grow! See how great God's power is. There is no power greater! Jesus was keeping the promise which He had made to His disciples that He would be with them, working to spread His kingdom over the whole earth. Now the men traveling with Saul stood there unable to say a word. They heard the sound but they did not see anyone. Then Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could not see anything. So they led him by the hand into Damascus and for three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.

Then God sent a man named Ananias, a different one, to tell Saul what to do. At first Ananias did not want to go. He had heard about Saul and the awful things he had done and he was afraid of him. But God told Ananias to go because this Saul was the man whom God had chosen to tell many people about Jesus. So Ananias went to the place where Saul was and told him that Jesus had sent him to fill Saul with the Holy Spirit and allow him to see again. Then Saul opened his eyes and he could see. He believed in Jesus now and was baptized. Then he ate and became strong again.

Saul spent the next few days with the followers of Jesus in Damascus. Then he began to preach in the synagogues about Jesus, the Son of God. Those who heard him were amazed. They knew how he had hated believers and now he was one himself. How could this be?

Saul was very brave and argued with the Jews and proved from the Scriptures that Jesus had fulfilled everything which the Bible said about the promised Savior. After many days the Jews decided that they should kill him. But Saul learned of their plan and some other believers took him and lowered him in a basket through the wall at night and he escaped.

When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the believers there but they were afraid of him. They thought that he was trying to trick them. But then Barnabas took him and brought him to the Apostles. He told them how Saul had seen Jesus and that Jesus had spoken to him and how Saul had spoken in the name of Jesus at Damascus. So Saul stayed with them and preached in Jerusalem. Some of the Jews tried to kill him there so he moved on to another place but he never stopped preaching about Jesus. We will learn more about Saul in the lessons ahead.

**Memory Verse:** "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you!" – Ezekiel 36:26.

**Application:** God can work in the heart of the most wicked man. None of us deserve God's grace for we have all sinned. Thank God for His Spirit and His Word.

**LESSON #96 – CORNELIUS THE CENTURION AND PETER**

*Acts 10-12*

What have you learned about the promises of God? He always keeps them! Over two thousand years before this time God had made a Covenant with Abraham. By now you should know what that Covenant is called; the Covenant of Grace. God promised that He would make a great nation of the descendants of Abraham. He promised that He would give them a Promised Land. He promised that His descendants would be like the sand on the seashore and the stars in the sky. God promised Abraham that because of someone who would be born from his descendants, all of the nations on the earth would be blessed. Sometimes you might think that God is slow about His promises. You might pray and think that God does not answer you. God will answer. You must be patient. This promise did not come true for two thousand years! You see, God knows what is best. You must always remember that and live to trust and obey God whatever happens or doesn't happen.

The Apostles had been "sent out" to tell others about the Gospel. As we have seen, the Jews thought that they alone could be God's people. At first the Apostles thought that, too. They thought that God just wanted them to preach to the Jewish people and not to the Gentiles. In our lesson today we will see how God showed them that this was not what He wanted.

In a city called Caesarea, there was a man named Cornelius. He was a soldier in the Roman army, but he believed in God and helped those in need and prayed to God regularly. One day as he prayed, an angel came to him. The angel told him to send to the city of Joppa to bring a man to his house. The man's name was Simon but he was called Peter! Cornelius did not know what this meant, but he did as he had been told to do and sent two of his servants and one of his soldiers who was also a believer to Joppa to get Peter. He did not know who Peter was at this time.

The next day, about noon, Peter was praying, and he became hungry. As he waited for something to eat, he had a vision, too. He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet was let down to the earth. In the sheet were all kinds of animals, reptiles and birds. Then a voice told Peter to get up and kill some of them and eat them. Now God had commanded the people in the Old Testament, before Jesus was born, not to eat certain kinds of meat. He said that they were unclean. This was to show the people of Israel and Judah that they were not like the other nations, they were special, they were God's people. Now Peter would not eat these things. He still thought that it was wrong because he thought that only the Jews were the people of God and that they needed to keep all of the commands which God had made to them before Jesus was born, died and rose again.

The voice spoke to Peter and told him that God had made these things clean so that they could be eaten. God meant that now all nations could be His people, not just the Jews. Peter did not understand this yet. About that time the messengers from Cornelius had arrived, and God told Peter to go with them. The next day they arrived at the house of Cornelius. Now Peter began to understand what God was telling him. He told Cornelius that it was against the laws of the Jews to visit a Gentile, but God had showed him that He was going to make many who were not Jews to be His people, too. Cornelius told Peter how God had spoken to him. Then Peter was sure that this is what God wanted.

Then Peter told them about Jesus and how those who believed in Him should be forgiven for all their sins. As Peter preached the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they began to speak in other languages praising God. Peter said that they should be baptized, and they became part of God's kingdom. Peter returned to Jerusalem and told the other Apostles what had happened. And now churches began to grow everywhere, and the people began to be called Christians for the first time. God was working!

*Cornelius and Peter (Continued)*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**MEMORY VERSE**

“There is no difference between Jew and Gentile...for ‘Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’” – Romans 10:12-13

**APPLICATION**

Many times people in different churches and in our churches come up with ideas as to what should be done and what should not be done. We must always decide what we should or should not do, by looking to God’s Word! He tells us what is right and what is wrong. Again we see the power of God to change people as they hear the Good News preached. May God give us the desire to take that word to others and to see how important the work of the church is. We need to be a part of the church to help each other to grow strong and to do the work which Jesus has given us as “Christians” to do!

**QUESTIONS**

Fill in the blanks with the words at the bottom.

1. Even though God may wait for a long time, He always keeps His \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Because we know that God is working and that Jesus will return someday, we can learn to be \_\_\_\_\_ and to spend our time trying to live for Him and serve Him.
3. Cornelius was a soldier in the \_\_\_\_\_ army, but he believed in God.
4. One day as Cornelius was \_\_\_\_\_, God sent an angel to tell him to send for a man named Simon, who was called Peter.
5. The next day God spoke also to \_\_\_\_\_ in a vision.
6. God showed Peter that the time had come for all nations to be His people by telling him that he could eat meat which before this had been called \_\_\_\_\_.
7. From this time on the Gospel would be taken not only to the Jews, but also to the \_\_\_\_\_.
8. When Peter came to the house of Cornelius, he told Peter how God had spoken to him and then Peter was sure that this was what \_\_\_\_\_ wanted.
9. Peter told Cornelius and his friends more about Jesus, and they believed and were \_\_\_\_\_ and received the gift of the Holy Spirit.
10. After Peter had returned to Jerusalem and told the Apostles what had happened, the church began to grow in many places, and the people who believed began to be called \_\_\_\_\_.

patient  
unclean  
God  
Praying

Christians  
promises  
Roman

Gentiles  
baptized  
Peter

<b>Class 5 Memorization</b>	<i>HC Q+A:</i>		<i>Scripture:</i>	
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**LESSON #96 – PENTECOST**

*Read Acts 2:1-47*

Jesus said, “I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it!” Ten days after the ascension of Jesus into heaven the disciples knew that Jesus was with them. They received the power of the Holy Spirit and began to fulfill the task which God had for them. It would be through be their witness that God would build His Church. In this first instance of the Gospel being preached we find God bringing forth much fruit. Many believed in Jesus Christ and were baptized as a sign of God’s Covenant. The message which Jesus gives us to take to the world is one of forgiveness and life. Only those who refuse that message will receive God’s judgment. People all over the world trust in themselves, believing that they can make themselves happy. God calls men to repent: to turn from trusting in themselves to trusting in Christ Jesus. He calls you to believe that living for Jesus is better than living for anything else, whatever it might be!

**QUESTIONS**

1. According to Acts 1:15, how many believers were there in Jerusalem at this time? \_\_\_\_\_  
 What decision were they making at this time (1:21-26)? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What happened on the day of Pentecost? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What was the result of the Holy Spirit coming upon them? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What surprised the people of Jerusalem when they came to where the disciples were? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Some of them thought that it was caused by \_\_\_\_\_
6. Who spoke for the disciples? \_\_\_\_\_  
 How did he explain what was happening to the crowd of people? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What did Peter say about the death of Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What was the most important thing which Peter said they could be sure of? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What did the people do when they heard this? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What did Peter tell them that they must do to be saved? \_\_\_\_\_
11. How many people believed and were baptized this day? \_\_\_\_\_
12. What activities did the early church engage in? \_\_\_\_\_
13. According to verse 47, who was building the church? \_\_\_\_\_

**QUESTION TO THINK ABOUT**

Did the people get saved by being baptized?