

Time Audit Chronicles: The Conversion of Saul

(Acts 9:1-31)

Prologue: A Persecutor Transformed

The Presswood family gathered in their cozy living room, reading about the **dramatic transformation** of Saul, who would later become the apostle Paul. Ariel, deeply engrossed, reflected on how someone so determined to destroy Christians could turn into one of their greatest advocates. Alice, with Mr. Fluffernutter tucked under her arm, was imagining herself alongside Saul on the dusty road to Damascus, seeing the blinding light and hearing the voice from heaven.

“Daddy,” Ariel asked, “Why would God choose Saul, of all people? He was so mean to Christians, and he didn’t even believe in Jesus.”

Ryan smiled, sensing the depth of her question. “That’s a great observation, Ariel. Saul was definitely an unlikely choice—he was a **zealous persecutor** of Christians, even overseeing their arrests and deaths. But that’s what makes his story so powerful. God chose Saul to show that **His grace** can transform even the hardest of hearts. Saul’s story reminds us that no one is beyond God’s reach, and that **God’s plans** are bigger than we can imagine.”

Ariel nodded. “So, Saul’s story is about how God can turn something bad into something good.”

“Exactly,” Ryan said. “Let’s use the **Time Audit Machine** to go back and see how Saul’s incredible transformation unfolded.”

The Journey Begins: Saul’s Zeal for Persecution (Acts 9:1-2)

The **Time Audit Machine** powered up, and in an instant, the family found themselves on the road to **Damascus**, surrounded by a small group of men traveling with **Saul**. Saul, a zealous Pharisee, was on a mission to **arrest Christians** and bring them back to Jerusalem for trial. The intensity in his eyes was unmistakable, and his determination was fueled by his belief that he was defending the purity of God’s law.

Ryan pointed to Saul, walking purposefully at the head of the group. “At this point, Saul believed he was doing God’s work by persecuting Christians. He thought the followers of Jesus were dangerous and that their message went against everything he had been taught.”

Ariel watched Saul closely. “He seems so sure of himself. It’s like he really thinks he’s doing the right thing.”

“Yes,” Ryan said. “Saul’s **zeal** for the law blinded him to the truth about Jesus. But God had big plans for him, and everything was about to change.”

The Blinding Encounter: Jesus Confronts Saul (Acts 9:3-9)

Suddenly, a **blinding light** flashed from heaven, stopping Saul in his tracks. The group around him shielded their eyes, stunned by the brilliance of the light. Saul fell to the ground as a voice called out, **“Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?”** (Acts 9:4).

Ariel gasped, watching the scene unfold. “That’s Jesus! He’s speaking to Saul!”

Ryan nodded. “Yes, Ariel. Jesus confronted Saul directly, making it clear that when Saul persecuted Christians, he was really persecuting **Him**. Jesus’ words showed Saul that He wasn’t just a teacher or a prophet—He was the **risen Lord**.”

Saul, trembling, asked, **“Who art thou, Lord?”** And the voice replied, **“I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.”** (Acts 9:5).

Ryan explained, “The phrase ‘kick against the pricks’ was a way of saying that Saul had been resisting God’s truth. Jesus was showing him that his fight against Christians was really a fight against God’s plan.”

Blinded by the light, Saul could no longer see. His companions, confused and afraid, led him by the hand into **Damascus**, where he waited, fasting and praying for three days.

Ananias’ Reluctant Mission: Obeying God’s Call (Acts 9:10-17)

Meanwhile, God spoke to **Ananias**, a disciple in Damascus, instructing him to go to Saul. Ananias hesitated, knowing Saul’s reputation as a persecutor of Christians. **“Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem.”** (Acts 9:13).

Ariel watched as Ananias struggled with fear and doubt. “I don’t blame him for being scared. Saul was arresting people like him!”

Ryan nodded. “It’s true, Ananias had every reason to be afraid. But God reassured him, saying, **‘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.’**” (Acts 9:15).

Ananias obeyed, trusting in God’s plan. He found Saul and laid his hands on him, saying, **“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.”** (Acts 9:17).

Ariel smiled. “Ananias called him ‘Brother Saul.’ That’s so kind. He didn’t hold a grudge—he treated Saul like part of God’s family.”

“That’s right,” Ryan said. “Ananias shows us the power of **obedience** and **forgiveness**. He trusted that God could transform Saul, and he played a key role in Saul’s conversion.”

Saul’s Baptism and Transformation *(Acts 9:18-19)*

Immediately, something like **scales** fell from Saul’s eyes, and he regained his sight. He was baptized and began eating, regaining his strength. Saul’s transformation was complete—he was no longer the zealous persecutor but a devoted follower of Jesus.

Alice, who had been quietly listening, spoke up. “So Saul was totally different after meeting Jesus?”

“Yes,” Ryan said. “Saul experienced a complete **transformation**. He realized that everything he had been fighting against was the **truth**, and now he was ready to dedicate his life to Jesus.”

Preaching in Damascus and Facing Opposition *(Acts 9:20-25)*

Saul wasted no time. He began preaching in the synagogues, declaring that **Jesus is the Son of God**. The people were amazed and confused, asking, “**Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem?**” (Acts 9:21).

Ryan pointed to the scene. “Saul’s transformation was so dramatic that people couldn’t believe it. He went from being the greatest persecutor to the boldest preacher of Jesus.”

Ariel smiled. “It’s like God completely changed his heart and gave him a new purpose.”

But Saul’s bold preaching angered the Jews in Damascus, who plotted to kill him. His new Christian friends helped him escape by lowering him in a basket through an opening in the city wall.

Saul Meets the Apostles in Jerusalem *(Acts 9:26-31)*

When Saul returned to Jerusalem, the disciples were afraid to meet him, unsure if his conversion was genuine. But **Barnabas**, a trusted believer, vouched for Saul, explaining how he had encountered Jesus and boldly preached in Damascus.

Ryan smiled at Barnabas’ role. “Barnabas was known as the ‘Son of Encouragement,’ and here we see why. He stood up for Saul, giving him the opportunity to join the apostles and continue his ministry.”

With Barnabas’ help, Saul was accepted by the apostles and began preaching in Jerusalem. Although he faced opposition from the Hellenistic Jews, his efforts helped strengthen the church and spread the gospel further.

Key Teaching: God's Transforming Grace

Back in their garage, the **Time Audit Machine** powered down, and the family sat in reflective silence. Ariel turned to Ryan, her eyes filled with wonder. “Daddy, Saul’s story is amazing. It shows that God can change anyone, no matter how bad they’ve been.”

Ryan nodded. “That’s exactly right, Ariel. Saul’s transformation reminds us that **no one is beyond God’s reach**. God’s **grace** can transform the hardest of hearts and use anyone for His purposes. Saul went on to become **Paul**, one of the greatest apostles, writing much of the New Testament and spreading the gospel to the Gentiles.”

Ariel smiled. “It’s like Saul’s story shows us that God doesn’t just forgive us—He gives us a new purpose.”

“Yes,” Ryan said. “Saul’s story is a powerful example of how God’s **grace** and **mercy** can change lives. It teaches us that we are never too far from God’s love and that He can use us, no matter our past, to accomplish great things for His kingdom.”

Takeaway: God's Grace and the Power of Transformation

In **Acts 9:1-31**, Saul’s encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus demonstrates the **transforming power of God’s grace**. Once a zealous persecutor of Christians, Saul is radically changed, becoming a devoted follower of Jesus and one of the most influential figures in church history. His story reminds us that **no one is beyond redemption**, and that