



**Worship Illustration: Storybook
Commander Cosmos
Prophets & Promises Part 1: Acts - Revelation
Unit 2, Lesson 6**

God Changes Saul's Heart

Acts 9:1-9, 13-20

Lieutenant Ruby Starlight let out a tired sigh as she walked through the break room door. She was glad Ambassador Nofutu decided to stay on board Skylab Omega to learn more about Jesus, but he was exhausting the crew with his endless questions! Ruby had just left him at the door of the official guest stateroom. This was her chance to sneak away and study the Bible so she could better answer his many questions. She reached into the Bible Box and carefully lifted the Bible out. As if on cue, the automatic door slid open and Nofutu spun into the room.

"It's story time!" Nofutu yelled. "I knew I heard the Bible Box opening! What are you going to read to me now?"

Ruby smiled tiredly and pulled a chair close to hers. The Ambassador appeared in the chair in a flash. "Okay, okay. I'll find you a story." She flipped through the pages until she saw Acts 9. "Oh, here's a good one. This is about the time God changed Saul's heart."

Nofutu's eyes blinked and he tilted his head. "Why? Was it broken?" he asked.

Ruby shrugged. "Well, you could say that. You see, Saul was a powerful Jewish leader, but he didn't believe Jesus was God's Son. In fact, he hated the followers of Jesus."

Nofutu waved his arms. "No! Don't be hatin', Saul!"

"He was hating!" Lt. Ruby emphasized. "Saul was a devoted Jew and he thought Christians were troublemakers, so he persecuted them."

"No!" Nofutu exclaimed. "He hated them just because their purses were cute?"

"Not cute purses! I said persecution!" Ruby corrected.

"Oh no! Not persecution—anything but persecution!" Nofutu shouted. Then he whispered, "What's persecution?"

"It's treating people unfairly just because of who they are or what they believe," Ruby explained. "Saul had some of Jesus' followers thrown in jail for no good reason."

Nofutu was aghast. "Whoa, I bet God locked Saul away forever for that one."

"No, but he did get Saul's attention in a way he would never forget." Ruby pointed up at the light shining down on them from the ceiling. "When Saul was on his way to Damascus, he saw the light."

Nofutu looked up at the light and squinted his eyes. "What is a Damascus?"

"It's a city. Saul thought he might find some followers of Jesus there. He wanted to throw them in prison, so can you guess where he went?" Ruby asked.

"To Damascus?" Nofutu guessed.

"That's right!" Ruby congratulated.

"I got one!" Nofutu jumped out of his chair and leapt across the room. He grinned broadly. "What happened next?" he asked eagerly.

"Let's have the computer show us." Ruby tapped a spot on the wall. A door slid open and the computer appeared. She commanded, "Computer, please show us what happened on Saul's journey."

"Aye, aye, Lieutenant," the computer replied. Acts 9 appeared on the screen. The computer read the words as Ruby and Nofutu watched, "As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?'"

Nofutu pushed back in his chair; his eyes were wide with fear. "I didn't do it! It wasn't me!"

Ruby rested an assuring hand on his arm. "No, no! God's not talking to you! That's what God said to Saul!"

Nofutu shook from head to toe. "Wowsie-woo-woo! That was scary!"

Ruby nodded. "Imagine how Saul must have felt! He was blinded by the light and fell to the ground. Then he asked, 'Who are you, Lord?'"

Ruby asked the computer to continue reading. "'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,' He replied. 'Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.'"

Lieutenant Ruby Starlight looked back at Nofutu. "When Saul stood up, he couldn't see, so his traveling buddies led him to Damascus. Saul waited there for three days."

"What do you think God was doing?" Nofutu asked.

"I think he was calling Saul to serve Jesus!" Ruby replied.

"But, Saul had been hurting God's people. I can't believe God would give someone like that such an important job." Nofutu shook his head and closed his eyes.

"Neither could Ananias!" Ruby added.

Nofutu cleared his throat loudly and asked, "Who was Laryngitis?"

Ruby laughed. "Not Laryngitis! Ananias! He was a follower of Jesus who had a vision."

"Did he see a pot of gold at the end of a rainbow?" Nofutu asked hopefully.

"No, but that would be nice! In a vision, Jesus called to Ananias to place his hands on Saul, so Saul could see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit," said Ruby.

Nofutu put a hand into the air. "If that were me, I would say, 'No way, Hosanna! That guy Saul likes to pick on Christians, like me! And I'm telling you, I'm not going—'"

Ruby interrupted, "Ananias was afraid, but let's see what Jesus told him."

On command, the computer continued reading, "But the Lord said to Ananias, 'Go! This man is My chosen instrument to carry My name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel.'"

"Did Tonsillitis go to Saul?" Nofutu asked.

"Ananias!" Ruby corrected. "He did and Saul was able to see again with his eyes and for the first time in his life, Saul saw Jesus with his heart!"

Nofutu's raised his eyebrows. "How do you know that?"

"The Bible says Saul began to preach at once that Jesus was the Son of God," Ruby replied triumphantly.

Nofutu thought for a moment. "So, God chose Saul to spread His Word even though Saul had been a naughty, naughty boo-boo?"

Ruby nodded. "God loved Saul. He always had a plan for Saul's life."

Nofutu frowned. "But, Saul was a sinner. Are you telling me God even loves sinners?"

"God loves all people and He will forgive and change the heart of anyone who believes in His Son," Ruby explained.

Nofutu plopped down in the center of room and rested his head on his hands. "Well, if God can forgive a naughty boy like Saul, do you think God could change my heart?"

Ruby grinned and stood up. "I think He would love to change your heart! Let's go down to the chapel and I can pray with you right now! After all—"

"Ooh, can I say it?" Nofutu interrupted. "Jesus is the same on Mother's Day, Valentine's Day, and my birthday!"

"Close enough!" Lieutenant Ruby Starlight laughed and waved for the Ambassador to follow her.