

# From Persecutor to Preacher

Saul encounters the risen Christ on the road to Damascus, transforming him from Christianity's greatest enemy to its most ardent advocate.

Acts 9:1-31 • Acts 22:3-21 • Acts 26:9-18

CHARACTERS: Saul/Paul, Jesus, Ananias, Barnabas

THEMES: Conversion, Grace, Divine calling, Transformation, Forgiveness

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SAUL OF TARSUS was breathing out threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord. A Pharisee trained under Gamaliel, he was convinced that followers of the Way were blaspheming God. He obtained letters from the high priest authorizing him to arrest any Christians in Damascus and bring them bound to Jerusalem.

As he journeyed, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice: 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?'

'Who are You, Lord?' Saul asked.

'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. Rise and go into the city, and you will be told what to do.'

The men traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. When Saul arose, he opened his eyes but could see nothing. They led him by the hand into Damascus, where he remained blind for three days, neither eating nor drinking.

Meanwhile, the Lord appeared to a disciple named Ananias, telling him to go to Saul. Ananias protested—he had heard of this man's persecution of the saints. But God said, 'Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine to carry My name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.'

Ananias obeyed. Laying his hands on Saul, he said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road has sent me that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.' Immediately something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He arose and was baptized.

Then Saul—soon to be known as Paul—began proclaiming Jesus in the synagogues, declaring that He is the Son of God. All who heard him were amazed: 'Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem of those who called on this name?' But Saul increased all the more in strength, confounding the Jews by proving that Jesus was the Christ.

The greatest persecutor had become the greatest preacher. The one who destroyed the church would build it. Grace had transformed an enemy into an apostle.

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