

Paul's Conversion on the Damascus Road

Saul of Tarsus, a fierce persecutor of Christians, encounters the risen Christ on the road to Damascus and is transformed from the church's greatest enemy into its most zealous apostle.

Acts 9:1-22 • Acts 22:6-16 • Acts 26:12-18

CHARACTERS: Saul/Paul, Jesus Christ, Ananias, Disciples in Damascus

THEMES: Conversion, God's Sovereignty, Grace, Calling, Transformation, Repentance

SAUL, YET BREATHING out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest and desired of him letters to Damascus, that if he found any of this way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. He was a Pharisee of Pharisees, zealous for the law, and he persecuted the church beyond measure.

As he journeyed and came near Damascus about noon, suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun. He fell to the earth and heard a voice saying, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?'

Trembling, Saul said, 'Who art thou, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.' In that moment, all of Saul's religious certainty crumbled. The One he thought to be a blasphemous impostor was indeed the Lord of glory, risen from the dead.

Saul arose from the earth, and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man—the glory had left him blind. They led him by the hand into Damascus, where he was three days without sight, neither eating nor drinking.

The Lord appeared to a disciple named Ananias, commanding him to go to Saul. Though Ananias feared Saul's reputation, the Lord said, '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.'

Ananias went and laid his hands on Saul, saying, 'Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.' Immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales, and he received sight forthwith, and arose and was baptized.

Straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. All that heard him were amazed. The greatest persecutor had become the greatest preacher.