

# SEEING THE LIGHT

After the religious leaders killed Stephen, they did everything they could to destroy the community of believers. A man named Saul led the charge: all he could think about was finding the Jesus followers and killing them. After he and the other leaders had caught or chased away all the believers in Jerusalem, Saul went to the high priest and asked to be sent to Damascus to arrest the believers there. The high priest gave him a letter to show to all the priests and teachers, saying that Saul was going to round up anyone who believed in Jesus and bring them back to Jerusalem in chains.

So he and his helpers headed north towards Damascus. The journey was uneventful until they were almost at the city. Suddenly, a light from the sky blazed down on Saul, right there in the road. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?”

“Who... who are you, lord?” asked Saul.

“I am Jesus, the one you’re persecuting. Now get up, go into the city, and listen for what you should do next.” Everyone around Saul was confused, because they could hear the sound of the voice but didn’t see anyone talking! As for Saul, when he got up and opened his eyes, he found that it didn’t make any difference—he’d been struck blind. So his helpers had to lead him by the hand into the city, where for the next three days he waited: blind, and refusing to eat or drink.

Meanwhile, there was a man named Ananias who lived in Damascus, and he was a follower of Jesus. God spoke to him in a vision, and gave him a startling message: “Ananias! Go over to Straight Street, to Judas’ house” (this was a different Judas). “Ask for a man named Saul, from Tarsus. He’s praying right now, and I’ve shown him a vision of you coming to lay hands on him so he can see again.”

“But Lord!” exclaimed Ananias. “Everybody is talking about all the terrible things this Saul has done to the believers in Jerusalem! And now he’s come to arrest all of us here!”

“Go,” God answered him. “I picked Saul to bring my message to kings and gentiles, as well as to the people of Israel. And I’ll show him how much he’ll need to suffer for my sake.”

So Ananias went and found Saul. He put his hands on Saul and said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who you saw on the road, sent me so that you could see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” Instantly something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, then he ate some food.

It didn’t take long for Saul to get his energy back, but now his message was a different one! When people in Damascus heard him preaching about Jesus and telling everyone that Jesus was God’s son, they were confused. “Isn’t this the guy who was just arresting all Jesus’ followers in Jerusalem? I thought he came here to arrest more of them?!” Saul didn’t care; he kept preaching that Jesus was the Messiah, and no one could argue against him.

## Wondering Questions

I wonder why God chose Saul to spread the Good News? Should God have punished him instead?

I wonder why God blinded Saul while speaking to him?

I wonder what Stephen’s family and friends thought about Saul becoming one of the most important people in the community of believers?