

Acts 9

The Road to Damascus

⁹ In the meantime Saul kept up his violent threats of murder against the followers of the Lord. He went to the High Priest ² and asked for letters of introduction to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he should find there any followers of the Way of the Lord, he would be able to arrest them, both men and women, and bring them back to Jerusalem.

³ As Saul was coming near the city of Damascus, suddenly a light from the sky flashed around him. ⁴ He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul! Why do you persecute me?"

⁵ "Who are you, Lord?" he asked.

"I am Jesus, whom you persecute," the voice said. ⁶ "But get up and go into the city, where you will be told what you must do."

⁷ The men who were traveling with Saul had stopped, not saying a word; they heard the voice but could not see anyone. ⁸ Saul got up from the ground and opened his eyes, but could not see a thing. So they took him by the hand and led him into Damascus. ⁹ For three days he was not able to see, and during that time he did not eat or drink anything.

¹⁰ There was a believer in Damascus named Ananias. He had a vision, in which the Lord said to him, "Ananias!"

"Here I am, Lord," he answered.

¹¹ The Lord said to him, "Get ready and go to Straight Street, and at the house of Judas ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul. He is praying, ¹² and in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come in and place his hands on him so that he might see again."

¹³ Ananias answered, "Lord, many people have told me about this man and about all the terrible things he has done to your people in Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And he has come to Damascus with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who worship you."

¹⁵ The Lord said to him, "Go, because I have chosen him to serve me, to make my name known to Gentiles and kings and to the people of Israel. ¹⁶ And I myself will show him all that he must suffer for my sake."

¹⁷ So Ananias went, entered the house where Saul was, and placed his hands on him. "Brother Saul," he said, "the Lord has sent me—Jesus himself, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here. He sent me so that you might see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." ¹⁸ At once something like fish scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he was able to see again. He stood up and was baptized; ¹⁹ and after he had eaten, his strength came back.

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ROAD TO DAMASCUS

In today's story, Paul changes beyond recognition from someone who hated Jesus to someone who loved Jesus. It all began when he saw a brilliant, blazing light. Paul was so stunned, as if he had some kind of an electric shock and in some ways, he had, because his old life was about to fizzle out and he was about to become someone new. But not quite yet, because for three days, Paul couldn't see, and yet it's as if for the first time, he saw clearer than ever before! He realised how blind he had been; not just in those three days, but most of his life. It wasn't until Jesus said something like, *Paul, wake up to who I am!* when he finally realised that Jesus is God!

Being a Christian is all about changing into someone completely new, and we can only do this by spending time with Jesus. The more we know Jesus, the more we get to see his light. When Paul met Jesus, it was big! But what mattered more was that his walk with Jesus was *much bigger*. We might start with baby steps to begin with, but if we *call* on Jesus, he helps us take bigger and bolder steps. Little did Paul know that when he planned to destroy the Church on the way to Damascus; he would end up building churches all the way to Rome!

Why? Because, Jesus' story is the best story ever told. It's the only true story of a person who is risen from the dead, whose life never ends. It's the *greatest* story because it gives us *real* hope that death isn't the end. It sounded crazy to Paul at first, and it might sound crazy to you now, but let Paul's testimony help you to call on Jesus to completely change your life, and you too, will get to see *your* life, in a new light.