

Transformed to Witness to the Community

Key Verse:
“Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”
—Acts 9:17

Selected Scripture:
Acts 9:1-31

earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest:

SAUL OF TARSUS HAD CON-
sented to the stoning death of Stephen, and also had been instrumental in persecuting the church. (Acts 8:1-3) In the opening verses of Acts 9, we find Saul once again set to continue what he perceived as God's will, that of ridding the region of the disciples of Jesus. He obtained authorization from the high priest to go to Damascus, “that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.”—vs. 2

The scriptural record states, “As he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the

. . . And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.” (vss. 3-6) Saul’s initial response, ‘Who art thou, Lord?’ is quite understandable, for truly only a powerful being could have caused such things to occur. Saul knew he must take notice and listen. Immediately the answer was given—this was the risen Jesus, whom Saul had been persecuting through his actions upon the followers of the Master.

Knowing that he had witnessed in a very personal way the mighty power of the risen Lord, Saul wasted no time in turning to him, and at once inquired as to what he should do. He was told to continue on to Damascus, where he would be further instructed. As these things were occurring to Saul, the Lord had also spoken in a vision to one of his disciples, Ananias, saying, “Arise, . . . and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight. Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. But the Lord said unto him, 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: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name’s sake.”—vss. 11-16

The Key Verse states that Ananias obeyed his instructions and met Saul, partially restoring his sight, and conveying the Holy Spirit upon him. What a blessed privilege it must have been for Ananias to be used in this way! He had the opportunity to help Saul make a complete and immediate transformation, from one who had earlier that very day been a persecutor of the Christians, to one who was now a devout follower of Christ.■