

Ananias Finds Saul of Tarsus

Key Verse: “*So Ananias went off and entered the house, laying his hands on him with these words, Saul, my brother, I have been sent by the Lord, by Jesus who appeared to you on the road, to let you regain your sight and be filled with the holy Spirit.*”
—Acts 9:17, James Moffatt translation

Selected Scripture:
Acts 9:10-20
ers.—I Cor. 12:12,27

After Saul got up from the ground, he realized he was now blind. Those traveling with Saul led him by the hand to Damascus. (Acts 9:8) What tremendous sorrow and guilt Saul must have had, now that he realized the very ones he had been pursuing and persecuting were actually the true worshippers of God. One evidence of this is that for three days Saul “neither did eat nor drink.”

SAUL OF TARSUS’ MISDIRECTED zeal, not according to knowledge, had led him to energetically persecute Jesus’ followers. As Saul was traveling to Damascus to incarcerate any men or women he found who espoused the way of Christ, “suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven.” A voice then said, “Saul, Saul, why persecutes thou me?” (Acts 9:2-4) When Saul inquired as to who was speaking to him, the response was: “I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.” (vss. 5,6) Saul was not persecuting the glorified Lord directly, but he was persecuting “the body of Christ,” his follow-

(vs. 9) The average person might live up to several weeks without eating any food. However, few people can survive, or avoid serious health consequences, without drinking for more than three or four days. God, however, did not allow Saul to die or to suffer ill health from his avoidance of food and drink. Instead, God sent Ananias, one of his humble and obedient servants who lived in Damascus, to intervene.—vs. 10

The Lord said to Ananias, “Go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus.” Saul had been praying during this time, and in some way God indicated to him that a man named Ananias would come and be used to restore his vision. (vss. 11,12) With concern, 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.”—vss. 13,14

The Lord reassured Ananias, saying, “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.” (vs. 15) Our Key Verse indicates that Ananias was encouraged, and went to Saul as the Lord had instructed. He told Saul that he had been sent by Jesus, and was the instrument God would use to restore his sight. Ananias also told Saul that he would be filled with God’s Holy Spirit. “Immediately, there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.”—vs. 18

Reflecting upon his previously misdirected zeal, Paul later wrote: “I am the least of the apostles, . . . because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am.” (I Cor. 15:9,10) Similarly, God has also “called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus.” (II Tim. 1:9) “Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.”—I Sam. 16:7 ■