

# Saul of Tarsus

**Key Verse:** *“And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”*  
—Acts 9:17, *New King James Version*

**Selected Scripture:**  
*Acts 9:1-18*

## **SAUL’S ZEAL FOR GOD**

was evident. He facilitated the stoning of Stephen, standing by and approving the event, as he watched the cloaks of the murderous mob. Not long after, Saul went to Israel’s high priest to obtain letters of authorization. He obtained formal permission to persecute the new Christian converts in Damascus. Men or women found to be in the “Way” would be bound and brought to Jerusalem. (Acts 9:1,2) In his own words, later in life, he would note those who “have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.” (Rom. 10:2, *NKJV*) Saul’s emotional enthusiasm was soon to be tempered. On his way to

Damascus he experienced a life-changing epiphany. His uninformed zeal would be dramatically altered by Truth!

The account of Saul’s conversion is notable: “As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? And he said, Who are You, Lord? Then the Lord said, I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads.

So he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what do You want me to do? Then the Lord said to him, Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”—Acts 9:3-6, *NKJV*

The Lord Jesus’ awe-inspiring revelation of himself to Saul effected an immediate change of heart. His zeal was now “according to knowledge”—the knowledge of the one who declared, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.”—John 14:6

Repentance is one of the profound tenets of Christian faith, allowing the sinner to find forgiveness and the paths of righteousness. It is often easier for the repentant one to grasp the fact of their change than for others to accept it. Let us not doubt the heart sincerity of any who profess to follow Christ. Rather, we should seek to identify Christian fruitage in their lives. Jesus commended this approach, “You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. ... Therefore by their fruits you will know them.”—Matt. 7:16-20, *NKJV*

Instructed in a vision to meet Saul, Ananias had to learn trust in the Lord’s choice, and he was thus assured. He went his way and entered the house pointed out by the Lord. There lay Saul, his sight impaired and in his mind waiting for the risen Lord’s next instruction. Ananias went in, and as noted in our Key Verse, told Saul that he had been sent by the Lord Jesus to welcome him into the brotherhood of Christ. He layed his hands on Saul to heal him from his blindness and to convey upon him the Holy Spirit. Immediately the scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he received his sight. He arose, was baptized, and served Christ to the end of his life. May we actively encourage those who have experienced true repentance to serve our Lord and Master. ■