

TITLE AND NUMBER: 78. The road to Damascus

REFERENCE AND KEY VERSE(S): Acts 9:1-19a

Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. (v1a)

As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." (v3-6)

In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision (v10a) Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord – Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here – has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." (v17)

LOOKING FURTHER: Acts 22:6-16; Acts 26:12-18; Romans 12:9-18



What does this Bible passage tell us?

Saul was an important, educated man. But he was also very dangerous to any followers of Jesus, because he thought his mission from God was to kill them. In our Bible passage, he was on his way to Damascus to take any Jesus-followers to Jerusalem as prisoners. Suddenly, a very bright light blinded him and he heard a voice asking, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" This confused Saul because he thought he was working for God. So he asked who the voice belonged to. The answer, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting." This shocked him as he realised that Jesus was alive and that all the believers had said was true. In that moment, Saul's life was changed and from opposing Jesus he would now serve Him for the rest of his life.

It does not seem possible that someone like Saul, who hated and persecuted followers of Jesus, would eventually become Paul, one of His greatest workers. But God's grace made it possible! God can change our hearts. It follows that we should not only pray for a change of our hearts, but also for those who want to harm us. This is not easy and we need God's grace to do it.

In our Bible passage, Ananias also needed God's help because he was probably very surprised and afraid when he was told to go to Saul. Ananias knew of Saul's terrible reputation. But he obeyed because he trusted God. Saul had seen Ananias in a vision (v.12), so he was expecting him. When Ananias arrived, spoke to him and laid hands on him, Saul knew for certain that God loved him. He received the Holy Spirit and was baptised.

Reflections:

- The story of Saul is encouraging. How would you like God's grace to change you?
- If there are people who have hurt you, try praying for them and see if that changes how you feel about them.
- If you are unsure whether or not God is calling you to do something, pray about it but also talk to other Christians and ask them to pray that God will make it clear to you.

Write or draw something you read in this Bible Study that stood out to you.



Do you have any questions about this week's Bible Study?



How does this week's message apply to your life?



What can we learn about God from this week's passage?



What would you like to ask God this week?



Has God responded to your prayers this week in the way you had hoped for? It's okay to talk to God about this.

