**ACTS IN ACTION**

 “Saul of Tarsus” became “Paul the Apostle” – (Not one of the 12, but a leader of the Early church and writer of most of the New Testament)

* Saul of Tarsus was born in approximately AD 5 in the city of Tarsus in Cilicia (modern-day Turkey).
* He was born to Jewish parents who possessed Roman citizenship which he also possessed.
* Sometime between AD 15—20 Saul began his studies of the Hebrew Scriptures in the city of Jerusalem under [Rabbi Gamaliel](https://www.gotquestions.org/Gamaliel-in-the-Bible.html).
* He describes himself as a “Hebrew of Hebrews”, an Israelite, and a [Pharisee](https://www.gotquestions.org/Sadducees-Pharisees.html) of the tribe of Benjamin.
* He oversaw the stoning of Stephen and threatened to kill others also.
* He ravaged the church, entering the homes of believers in Jerusalem committing men and women to prison. He then planned to persecute other areas as well.

Saul’s Conversion

**ACTS 9**Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord’s disciples. He went to the high priest **2**and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. **3**As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. **4**He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?”

**5**“Who are you, Lord?” Saul asked.

“I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,” he replied. **6**“Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”

**7**The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. **8**Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. **9**For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.

**10**In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, “Ananias!”

“Yes, Lord,” he answered.

**11**The Lord told him, “Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. **12**In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight.”

**13**“Lord,” Ananias answered, “I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem. **14**And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name.”

**15**But the Lord said to Ananias, “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. **16**I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.”

**17**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.” **18**Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, **19**and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. **20**At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. **21**All those who heard him were astonished and asked, “Isn’t he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name? And hasn’t he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?” **22**Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Messiah.

*From* a mean-spirited, murderous, legalistic, Pharisee.

*To* a humble, servant-hearted, sacrificial Christian man who taught us more about love than anyone besides Jesus.

**Ananias**

Chutzpah - audacity, brazen nerve

Ananias is telling God who Saul WAS and IS,

The Lord responds by telling Ananias who Saul WILL BE:

**ACTS 9:1-15**

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**15**But the Lord said to Ananias, “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel.

God knows all about who you WERE and who you ARE,

But He also knows and sees who you WILL BE!

**He is not as concerned with where you came from,**

 **as He is with where you are going.**

1 Sam 16:7 “The LORD doesn’t see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”

Ask God to give you;

* FAITH – That even the hardest hearts of the people in your life can change.
* VISION – To have a glimpse of what it would look like if that happened.
* COURAGE (Chutzpah) – To be willing to speak the right words at the right time that they need to hear.