

## A huge moment in the life of the church

### Acts 9:1-31

God used persecution to initiate mission and push the church out of Jerusalem into the surrounding regions. Next comes a huge moment in the life of the church as Jesus raises up a most unlikely leader to will take the message of the gospel to the ends of the earth.

#### Let's meet Saul

##### verses 1-9

What do we now about Saul before he meets Jesus?

Describe Saul's encounter with Jesus? What is unique about his meeting with Jesus? The post-ascension appearance of Jesus is unique. It only happens here to Paul, and John on Patmos.

Optional question: Drawing on your knowledge of the Bible, compare Saul's experience with that of Moses in [Exodus 3:1-6](#) and the prophet Jonah.

#### Enter Ananias, stage left ...

##### verses 10-19a

Why is Ananias reluctant to visit Saul?

Ananias has an important role in the conversion of Saul. Why do you think God involved Ananias in the conversion of Saul?

Ananias places his hands on Saul and calls him *Brother Saul* confirming God's acceptance and his acceptance into Christian fellowship. He now belonged to Christ and is part of Christ's family. Barnabas will also do this for Saul later in the passage.

Paul is healed and filled with the Holy Spirit, then he is baptised. Discuss the significance of these details.

What does Saul's conversion teach us about God's power to bring people to faith?

How does this encourage you in your evangelism?

#### Saul's begins work

##### verses 19b-31

How has Saul's attitude towards Jesus changed?

He saw Jesus as a false Messiah but now knows Jesus as the fulfilment of all he believed and hoped for.

Saul now has a new mission. What is his new work? (see v15)

He is commissioned by Jesus to share the gospel. It is important for us to see he is chosen and appointed by Jesus himself. Later his writings will make up a big part of the Scriptures. What should our attitude be towards these letters? Answer: These are Jesus' words to us, as Paul is Jesus' ambassador.

What reaction does Saul receive to his ministry?

At first the Christians don't trust him and twice the Jews plot to kill him. He needs Barnabas to advocate for him among the Christians, who then send Saul away to Tarsus for his protection.

How is the life of the church summarised in **verse 31**?

God is continuing to grow the church. The gospel is spreading. This plans will not be thwarted.

## **Christian Conversion**

All Christian conversion involves:

1. A divine initiative
2. A personal encounter
3. A spiritual surrender

Reflect on how God has worked in your life. Share the miracles of your conversions.