

Saul Sees a Great Light

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Scene Summary

Saul sees a great light presents the exciting story of Saul the persecutor who becomes Paul the great preacher. Scenes include: Saul receiving letters from the High Priest to permit him to arrest Christians...the trip with friends to Damascus...the light and the Voice from heaven...Saul's blindness...friends leading him to Damascus...the Lord speaks to Ananias in a dream...Ananias visits Saul...God heals Saul's blindness...Saul eagerly learns more about Jesus from believers...Saul begins to preach.

Scripture

(Acts 9:1-22 NIV) 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 saints 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 carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before 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 Christ.

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Players

- **Narrator** – The play's "catechist" or teacher should be a good reader with a clear voice.
- **Saul** – The main character of this story.
- **Ananias** – A very humble disciple of Jesus.
- **High Priest** – Very pious, dressed in fine clothing.
- **Person 1, 2** – Small but important speaking roles.
- **Jesus** – A strong, offstage voice.

Special Props

- Normal items from the prop box such as cloaks, veils, robes and headdresses.

Script – Saul Sees a Great Light

High Priest: [sternly] Here's the letters to the High Priest in Damascus. Arrest everyone you find that teaches that Jesus is God's Son.

Saul: I will.

Narrator: Soon, Saul and his friends were hurrying toward Damascus.

Person 1: The disciples have told many people that Jesus is God's Son.

Person 2: And that He came alive again after He was killed.

Person 1: There are more believers every day.

Saul: [angry] We must stop them from talking about Jesus. [patting the bag] I have letters here stating that we can arrest people in Damascus.

Narrator: Suddenly a bright light from heaven shown down on Saul. He stumbled and fell, his face to the ground.

Jesus: Saul, Saul. Why are you working against me?

Saul: [trying to look up at the light] Who are you Lord?

Jesus: I am Jesus, the One you are persecuting.

Saul: [with fear] Lord, what do you want me to do?

Jesus: Go to Damascus. There you will find out what you must do.

Narrator: Slowly the light faded and Saul tried to open his eyes.

Saul: [scared] I cannot see.

Narrator: The people with Saul were so frightened they could not speak. They helped Saul to his feet. They took Saul by the hands and slowly lead him along the road into Damascus. Quietly, they walked into the city and found a place to stay.

Narrator: Saul began to fast and pray. He did not eat for three days. He thought about the voice.

Saul: [to himself] I have been wrong! I thought I was serving God, but all the time I was working against Him.

Narrator: In another part of town, a church leader, named Ananias, was praying. Jesus spoke to him.

Jesus: Ananias! Go to Straight Street, to Judas' house and ask for Saul. He is praying. In a vision, he has seen you come and lay hands on him to restore his sight. He is expecting you.

Ananias: Lord, I have heard how Saul hates you and those that believe in you. He came here to arrest us.

Jesus: Go! Don't be afraid. This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.

Ananias: [hurries to Saul] Brother Saul, Jesus told me to come to you. He has sent me so that you may see again and to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Narrator: [excited] Immediately, Saul's blindness was cured.

Saul: I believe that Jesus is God's Son. I want to obey Him.

Narrator: Saul met the disciples in Damascus and others who believed in Jesus.

Saul: Tell me what Jesus taught you.

Narrator: Saul asked many questions. For many days he learned about Jesus and His teachings. Saul went to the Synagogue and read aloud from the scrolls. He told the people that God had sent His Son Jesus into the world.

Saul: He died for you. God wants to forgive your sins.

Person 1: I am surprised to hear Saul talk about Jesus.

Person 2: Isn't he the one that used to arrest believers and put them in jail?

Narrator: Everywhere Saul went he talked about Jesus.

Saul: He is the Savior. He loves you. He will forgive your sins. He wants you to obey Him.

Narrator: Many people believed in Jesus when they heard Saul's preaching.

The End

Supplemental Information

Saul was born in the city of Tarsus, a city far to the north of Palestine. It was sent in the Sicilian plains, about 10 miles inland from the Mediterranean Sea. With an estimated population of one half million, Tarsus was a large city for its day.

Saul was raised in a typical Jewish home. He probably attended a Synagogue school when he was about five years old and started to learn the scriptures. At about age 10, Jewish boys began studying the oral law, and at about at 13, they began their study of the written law. Some scholars think that Saul was sent to study the law in Jerusalem when he was about 10 years old. Others believe he went when he was about 5.

At Jerusalem, he attended the most influential of the great rabbinical schools, the school of Hillel. His teacher was Gamaliel a well-known scholar, whose grandfather founded the school.

Saul became a member of the Pharisee sect. This group taught and interpreted the law of God. They loved ceremony and made many new rules that were hard to keep. They rigidly followed their rituals, gave liberally to the poor, fasted often and made long prayers. They were very zealous and eager to make converts to their religion.

As a young man, Saul was elected to the 71 member Sanhedrin, the highest Jewish court. Saul was very zealous and persecuted those that followed Jesus' teaching, both men and woman, beginning in Jerusalem. He had them beaten and put into prison. He was willing to travel great distances to stop this new religion. He eagerly started on a trip to arrest believers in Damascus. Damascus is considered by some scholars to be the oldest city in the world.

Ananias was a Jew that had become a follower of Jesus. He had heard of Saul, who by now had become notorious, but had never met him. When Saul began to preach to the Gentiles, he changed his name to Paul. Saul is a Jewish name, and Paul is Roman. He continued to preach to the Jews also, and went to the synagogues to worship with them. Synagogues were meeting places where Jews met to study the law of God. The scrolls, or the Bible books were kept in a special chest called an ark. Guests were often asked to read the scriptures and explain them. Men and women did not sit together in the synagogue.

Extra time

Books in Bible days were different from books we have today. They were made by gluing many sheets of paper end to end to form a long strip. A wooden rod was attached to each end and the paper rolled towards the center. Books of the Bible were preserved in scrolls, as well as other important documents. Important letter were sometimes rolled, too. Perhaps the letter Saul received from the High Priest was on a scroll.

Make a Bible-time scroll by pasting together several sheets of paper, end to end. Staple or glue wooden dowels or paper tubes at both ends. Roll toward the center. Since Bible-time books were handwritten, you may want each pupil to copy their weekly memory verses for the full quarter in the scroll. They may add a verse each week.