

# Saul is Called

## Acts 9 v 1-19

### Context:

So far in this mini-series on biblical characters who were called by God, we have met a crew of fishermen from Galilee who left their nets to work with Jesus, and a man called Isaiah who was given a tough assignment as a prophet in Israel. Today we meet a very zealous religious Jew whose life was turned upside down (or maybe the right way up?) when he met the risen Jesus on the road to Damascus. He was never the same again, and, arguably, neither was the world. So, let's join Saul as he makes the long journey north from Israel to Syria on a murderous mission.

### Observation:

1. What was Saul doing in v 1?
2. To whom did Saul go and for what purpose in v 1b-2?
3. What did he see as he neared Damascus (v 3)?
4. What did he hear in v 4?
5. What was his response in v 5a and what reply did he receive in v 5b-6?
6. What effect did this have on Saul's travelling companions (v 7)?
7. What was the effect on Saul of what Saul had seen and heard (v 8a) and what happened to him in v 8b?
8. What condition was Saul in for the next three days (v 9)?
9. Who did the Lord call in v 10?
10. What instructions did he receive and why in v 11-12?
11. How did Ananias react in v 13-14?
12. What was the Lord's reply in v 15-16?
13. What did Ananias then do and say in v 17 and what was the result in v 19?

### Meaning:

1. In the early days of the Christian movement, Saul, a fanatical Pharisee who hated Jesus, had supervised the execution of a disciple called Stephen in Jerusalem which led to a widespread persecution of Jesus' followers, headed by Saul (see Acts 7 v 54 – 8 v 3). Why do you think Saul was so violently opposed to Jesus and the Christian movement?
2. Why do you think the new Christian faith was first called The Way (v 2)? Do you think this was a good and suitable name?
3. Saul was persecuting the *followers* of Jesus, so why do you think Jesus accused him of persecuting *Jesus* himself in v 4-5?
4. What do you think Saul must have been feeling and thinking as he met the risen Jesus and why would this experience have convinced him that Jesus really is the Messiah, the Son of God?

5. What accounts for Saul's blindness and what is the significance of the length of time he was unable to see (v 8-9)?
6. What do think Saul did during those days of blindness (see v 11-12)?
7. Can you identify with Ananias' reaction in v 13-14? What would you have done?
8. Why do you think God deliberately chose Saul to be his missionary (v 15)? What does this teach us about God's nature and the way he chooses to work?
9. Saul's call would involve much suffering (v 16 – see also 2 Corinthians 11 v 23 – 12 v 10). Why do you think God allowed him to experience such intense and relentless suffering? To what extent does God's call on our lives lead to suffering and how do we handle it?
10. Ananias had the courage to obey God (v 17-19). What was the risk for him in obeying this call and what kinds of risks do we face in obeying God's call in our lives?

#### **Application:**

1. Saul's call on the road to Damascus was twofold – he was called to become a follower of Jesus, and also to be a missionary for Jesus. To what extent was *our* call to become a Christian also a call to serve Jesus?
2. In this passage we see God calling two men – Saul and Ananias – both played different roles in God's plan of salvation for the world. Do you know that God has called you and are you living out that calling faithfully by God's grace?

#### **Pray:**

- Thank God for his call on your life - to follow Jesus and to serve him.
- Pray for God's grace to have the courage to obey him, even if it is risky and costly.