

# Called to Preach

Bible Background • [ACTS 9:1–31](#)  
Printed Text • [ACTS 9:10–20](#)  
Devotional Reading • [1 TIMOTHY 4:6–16](#)

## Aim for Change

At the end of the lesson, we will: GRASP that God calls preachers and others to share His Word; FEEL the love that God has for the world; and ENCOURAGE those called to preach and share His Word.



## In Focus

Rasaan didn't know if he should say something in this situation. His friend Benjamin had been going on and on about how he didn't believe in God. Benjamin said that if God were real, then He wouldn't allow all of the bad things in this world to happen. Rasaan had dealt with the same issues about a year before. Benjamin kept talking about God and getting angrier and angrier. Soon their other friends, Tasha and James, came by and began to shake their heads in agreement. Rasaan didn't know the right words to say, but the night before, he was sure God had spoken to him and said that he was called to preach. So he prayed that the Holy Spirit would guide him. As soon as Benjamin took a breath, Rasaan began to challenge him. "Hold up, B. What about all the good you see in the world? How did all of the good get here?" Benjamin stopped and began to think. His eyebrows were furrowed, and his face looked puzzled. Rasaan continued, "God created this world and said that it was good. It's us humans who have messed this world up." Tasha and James listened closely. "God even used the evil in this world to create His greatest good for humanity: the love and forgiveness that comes from Jesus Christ." Benjamin looked like he wanted to know more.

*In today's lesson, we explore the call to preach. Have you ever experienced a time when God called you to preach, teach, or share His Word?*

## Keep in Mind

"And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God" ([Acts 9:20](#)).

## KJV

**Acts 9:10** And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord.

**11** And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth,

**12** And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.

**13** Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem:

**14** And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.

**15** But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:

**16** For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

**17** And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.

**18** And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

**19** And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus.

**20** And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.

## NLT

**Acts 9:10** Now there was a believer in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord spoke to him in a vision, calling, "Ananias!" "Yes, Lord!" he replied.

**11** The Lord said, "Go over to Straight Street, to the house of Judas. When you get there, ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul. He is praying to me right now.

**12** I have shown him a vision of a man named Ananias coming in and laying his hands on him so that he can see again."

**13** "But Lord," exclaimed Ananias, "I've heard many people talk about the terrible things this man has done to the believers in Jerusalem!

**14** And he is authorized by the leading priests to arrest everyone who calls upon your name."

**15** But the Lord said, "Go, for Saul is my chosen instrument to take my message to the Gentiles and to kings, as well as to the people of Israel.

**16** And I will show him how much he must suffer for my name's sake."

**17** So Ananias went and found Saul. He laid his hands on him and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road, has sent me so that you may get your sight back and be filled with the Holy Spirit."

**18** Instantly something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he got up and was baptized.

**19** Afterward he ate some food and regained his strength. Saul stayed with the believers in Damascus for a few days.

**20** And immediately he began preaching about Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is indeed the Son of God!"

## The People, Places, and Times

**Saul/Paul.** First known as Saul. His birthplace was Tarsus, the major city in Cilicia. Saul was born a citizen of Rome. Paul was his Roman name and his father was probably a Roman. He also had a Jewish name, “Saul.” Saul saw the church in Jerusalem as a threat to the things so dear to him. Saul had an encounter with God on the road to Damascus, which changed his life forever. He became an apostle to the Gentiles.

**Damascus.** One of the old cities with extensive history of being ruled by many other political powers. Like many cities in the area, it has a turbulent history of being passed from one empire to the next and trying to gain independence. In Roman times, thousands of Jews lived there who worshiped in many synagogues..

## Background

Saul showed harsh aggression against the disciples. He went to the high priest, Caiaphas, to obtain written permission giving him power to arrest those of “the Way.” Saul was headed to Damascus, a city that had a great number of Jewish Christians. On his way, he saw a great light from heaven and fell to the ground. Then God spoke to him, asking Saul why he was persecuting Him. After his dialogue with Jesus, Saul was both trembling and astonished, and he asked Jesus another question: “What shall I do, Lord?” ([Acts 22:10](#)). Jesus told him to get up and go to the city, where he would be told what to do. The men with Saul were speechless because they heard the voice but could not see anyone. They led Saul into Damascus. There he was unable to see, eat, or drink for three days. God was working a mighty change for the church in those three days. Once He had Saul where He wanted him, He called His follower Ananias to do his part.

### At-A-Glance

1. Ananias Assigned ([Acts 9:10–12](#))
2. Ananias Answers (vv. 13–16)
3. Ananias Acts (vv. 17–20)

## In Depth

### 1. Ananias Assigned ([Acts 9:10–12](#))

Although Saul came to arrest Christians, he was waylaid on the road to Damascus and told to wait for a man he had never met. Verse 10 tells about a man named Ananias. The Lord speaks to him and gives his assignment: rise and go. Ananias would be the first to show Christian compassion to Saul of Tarsus. God told him what to do—find Saul and lay hands on him—and what would happen—Saul would see again. God will prepare the way for you to minister. In some cases, the Lord will give you assignments and tell you where, what to do, and what to expect. Be ready and say, “I am here, Lord.”

### 2. Ananias Answers (vv. 13–16)

Ananias answered his call from the Lord, but when he heard the assignment, he experienced some apprehension. He told the Lord what he had heard about Saul and his actions against the saints in Jerusalem. He tells the Lord about Saul’s authority. The Lord heard what Ananias said,

but did not change His mind about the call He had given to him. God knows sometimes you will be fearful. He assures you He has a plan for you ([Jeremiah 29:11](#)). So, know that God already knows and cares about your concerns. God had work for Saul to do, and wanted Ananias to assist with the plan. God is calling you to help others get where they need to be. Sometimes it will not be about you, but about others.

### **3. Ananias Acts (vv. 17–20)**

Ananias went to find Saul. Ananias was to lay hands on Saul in order for him to receive his sight. The Lord is looking for people who will act on what He has called them to do. Ananias did not do what he wanted, but instead what God asked him to do. Ananias had to change his attitude about Saul and not see him for what he was, but what he would become. Will you do what the Lord calls you to do? Opening Saul's eyes was not by Ananias' power; he was a vessel the Lord used to do His will. Only the Lord could restore sight to the blind. Now Saul would be able to preach the Word to others.

### **Search the Scriptures**

1. What caused Ananias to obey the Lord's instructions to Him ([Acts 9:11–12](#))?
2. Is Saul's calling to take Jesus' message and suffer for His name applicable to all people (vv. 13–14)?

### **Discuss the Meaning**

Can God pick anyone He wants to work for Him? God has the plan and knows the outcome. Are you ready to submit to God's authority? Will you allow Him to depend on you to work His plan? Why or why not?

### **Lesson in Our Society**

Many people are ready to do whatever it takes to get money and become famous. Some people would kill, steal, lie, or cheat. But where are the Christians today that will do anything to make sure the Gospel is preached? The things that are important to God should also be important to you. Christians need to be ready to give their lives so others can have eternal life.

### **Make It Happen**

Ask God to articulate His calling for you. Be prepared to go beyond your comfort zone to reach those whom God sends to you. Sometimes people appear mean and nasty, but it is up to you to see what God sees in them. Be the Christian that God can count on to do the hard things.

### **Follow the Spirit**

What God wants me to do:

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### **Remember Your Thoughts**

Special insights I have learned:

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## More Light on the Text

### **Acts 9:10–20**

**10 And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord.**

Ananias is identified as a “disciple” (Gk. *mathetes*, mah-they-TASE), and Paul later describes him as “a devout man according to the law” ([Acts 22:12](#)). The pattern of call and response is similar to that of Samuel’s ([1 Samuel 3:4, 10](#)). Ananias’ response contradicts the fear he later experiences.

**11 And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, 12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.**

The vivid details in the message—the name of the street, the owner of the house, and the place of Saul’s origin—are compatible with reliable historical traditions and good storytelling. We are never told about Saul’s vision of Ananias from his own point of view, but only indirectly through the means of another vision.

**13 Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem.**

Ananias is allowed not only to voice his (understandable) reluctance to encounter such a dangerous person, but also to help the reader deal with the obvious objections. Human hesitancy is legitimate but can be overturned by the Lord’s command. Ananias’ version of events gives us a slightly different perspective. Luke uses the term “saints” or “holy ones” (Gk. *hagios*, HAH-gee-ose) with reference to God’s people ([Acts 9:41, 26:10](#)). Later Paul frequently used this term for the same purpose ([Romans 1:7, 15:25; 2 Corinthians 1:1, 8:4; Philippians 1:1](#)).

**14 And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. 15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:**

Saul is explicitly said to have “authority” (Gk. *exousia*, ek-sue-SEE-ah) from the chief priests. This word implies having both the political authority and physical force needed to complete a task. The phrase “all that call on thy name” echoes the statement from [Acts 2:21](#): “[W]hosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” It also echoes the statement of [Genesis 4:26](#) as a foundational principle of what it means to trust in the Lord.

Literally, “a vessel” (*skeuos*, SKEW-occe) can mean any sort of instrument ([1 Thessalonians 4:4; Hebrews 9:21](#)), but can be especially used in the context of divine instrumentality ([Romans 9:22–23; 2 Timothy 2:20–21](#)). Since God speaks of Saul as His “vessel,” Saul appropriately will “bear” the Lord’s name, making him a useful instrument for God. The image is remarkably like

that used by Paul himself speaking of carrying the glory of God “in earthen vessels” ([2 Corinthians 4:7](#)). The designation of Paul as “chosen,” in turn, associates him with the description of Jesus as the “chosen of God” ([Luke 23:35](#)). This terminology has collectively been applied to all believers, although in this sense it speaks of Saul being chosen for his particular task.

**16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name’s sake. 17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.**

The use of the phrase “must suffer” places Saul directly and deliberately in the line of suffering prophets like Moses and Jesus ([Luke 9:22, 24:26; Hebrews 11:24-26](#)). To suffer for Jesus’ name, in turn, means that he does so as Jesus’ representative ([Luke 6:22, 21:12, 17; Acts 5:41](#)).

The gesture of laying on of hands symbolizes the transfer of power. It appears in sacrificial rites ([Exodus 29:10, 19; Leviticus 1:4, 4:15, 16:21](#)) and as part of the ordination of priests ([Numbers 8:10](#)). Even more impressive is the formal transfer of authority from Moses to Joshua through this gesture ([Numbers 27:18–23](#)). This passage makes clear that the gesture signified that the people should now obey Joshua just as they had Moses. In Luke, the laying on of hands appears as part of Jesus’ healings, which Luke clearly understands as a communication of power ([Luke 4:40, 13:13](#)). In Acts, the gesture accompanies the bestowal of the Spirit in baptism (8:17, 19, 19:6), healing (28:8), and commissioning for ministry (13:3).

In the present case, the laying on of hands works both as a healing and a bestowal of the Holy Spirit. The use of Saul’s name with the title “brother” and the physical gesture of touching recognize Saul’s acceptance as a member of God’s covenant people.

**18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized. 19 And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. 20 And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.**

The composition of what covered Saul’s eyes is not clear. The text describes it as something like “scales” that fell from his eyes. This image of scales falling from one’s eyes is so iconic that it has become a saying to figuratively describe enlightened understanding or illumination. In the words of the hymn “Amazing Grace,” Saul “was blind but now can see.” The light that blinded him physically paradoxically relieved him of his spiritual blindness. In Saul’s case, his sight was associated with revelation.

After gaining his sight, Saul takes his first step of obedience in undergoing baptism. He now identifies with the Jesus who is worshiped by the believers he once persecuted. There would be no turning back now. He was now part of the body of Christ.

After being baptized, Saul ate and gained strength. Then he connected with the disciples in Damascus. Saul had the opportunity to experience the fellowship of other believers. The same believers whom he had authority to persecute were now welcoming him into their homes. Saul, who is also called Paul, was now a different man and preached that Jesus was the Son of God.

## Say It Correctly

Ananias. a-nuh-**NIE**-us.

Tarsus. **TAR**-sus.

## Daily Bible Readings

### MONDAY

Saul's Mandate to Capture Believers

([Acts 22:1–15](#))

### TUESDAY

A Trustworthy Preacher

([Titus 1:5–9](#))

### WEDNESDAY

Saul Proclaims Jesus in Damascus

([Acts 9:21–25](#))

### THURSDAY

Saul in Tarsus; Jerusalem at Peace

([Acts 9:26–31](#))

### FRIDAY

Paralytic Aeneas Healed in Lydda

([Acts 9:32–35](#))

### SATURDAY

Jesus Calls Saul on Damascus Road

([Acts 9:1–9](#))

### SUNDAY

Called to Preach

([Acts 9:10–20](#))