



PREVIEW ONLY

Saul Sees the Light

When the Hunter becomes the Hunted

by Paul Ellis

- What** A terrorist is hunting Christians from house to house, but Someone is hunting him.
- Themes: grace, mercy, love
- Message** No one is beyond the reach of God's grace
- Who** Minimum 5 characters with doubling; 11+ characters without
- NARRATOR (for table readings; otherwise replace with lines for direction)
SAUL, the hunter of Christians
CAIAPHAS, the high priest
ALEXANDER, a senior member of the Sanhedrin
JESUS, the light of the world
ANANIAS, a brave disciple from Damascus
BARNABAS, a brave disciple from Jerusalem
CLAUDIA, a Damascene
ZEEK, a Damascene
JOANNA, a Christian living in Jerusalem
MARK, a Christian living in Jerusalem
Assorted others who react with adlibbed lines
- Props** Letters for Saul to carry
- Time** 10 minutes
- Ages** 11+
- Source** Acts 8:1-3, 9:1-31, also 22:3-21, 26:4-20
- Bonus** Free leader's guide with fun facts, discussion questions, and illustrations.

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Narrator In a room lit with smoky lamps, 70 men were arguing. They were the Sanhedrin, the chief priests and elders that make up the ruling council of Israel.

Caiaphas stands in a circle of the chief priests.

Caiaphas Our nation is facing a grave crisis. More of our people are turning away to follow this dead messiah. Although we eliminated Jesus the Nazarene, his disciples insist that he rose from the dead.

The others murmur angrily in agreement.

Caiaphas *(Frowns)* We arrested their leaders, Peter and John, yet still they did not stop preaching this resurrection. In fact, their numbers increased.

All *(More angry murmurs)*

Caiaphas But since we murdered Stephen, there has been a change. Alexander, tell them.

Caiaphas addresses Alexander then steps aside to give him more space.

Alexander The followers of Jesus have fled the city.

All *(Joyful)* Hooray!
Praise be!
Jerusalem is saved!

Caiaphas My brothers, the Holy City has been cleansed. We have stopped this outbreak of lawlessness.

A new voice interrupts.

Saul We haven't stopped anything.

Alexander *(Turns)* Who speaks against the high priest?

All heads turn to a young man with a face set like stone.

Saul I, Saul of Tarsus, have personally gone from house to house arresting the disciples of Jesus, both men and women. It is true, they have fled Jerusalem, but they have taken their message to Judea and Samaria. They have become missionaries.

Alexander waves his hand in a dismissive manner.

Alexander Good riddance. Let them go.

Face flushed, Saul shakes his fist.

Saul We cannot allow this wickedness to spread! Have you forgotten how Jesus stood in this very room claiming to be God's Son? His followers are a threat to our religion wherever they go.

Caiaphas I agree. It is our duty to defend the honor of God. Young man, what do you propose?

Saul Give me letters of introduction and I will hunt these law-breakers to the ends of the earth. I will bring them in chains for judgment. I will show them that no one is beyond the reach of God!

The rest agree, becoming angry again.

All Punish them! Destroy them all!

Narrator Sometime later, Saul was approaching the walled city of Damascus. He carried a leather satchel and was escorted by a dozen temple guards. Although it was the middle of day, Saul walked with purpose showing no sign of stopping.

Saul addresses the temple guards, voice firm.

Saul I see the city gates. As soon as we're inside, summon the synagogue rulers. They will give us the names of those we seek, and we will crush this movement once and for all.

Narrator Suddenly, a dazzling light struck the group scattering the guards and knocking Saul to the ground. The air sizzled with irresistible power, and Saul lay flat as though pressed by an invisible weight. A voice spoke from heaven:

Jesus Saul, Saul, why are you hunting me?

Cowering on the ground, Saul hears the voice but he cannot turn to face the light.

Saul *(Voice shaking)* Who are you, Lord?

Jesus I am Jesus, the one you are hunting.

Saul My Lord, I... I did not know. What shall I do?

Jesus Get up and go into the city. There you will be told all I have planned for you.

The light lifts leaving the guards speechless with shock. Saul touches his face.

Saul My eyes. I can't see. Help me.

A guard helps Saul to his feet.

Narrator The men led Saul by the hand into Damascus where he didn't eat or drink for three days. In the same city there was a disciple, a good man named Ananias. The Lord spoke to him in a vision.

Jesus Ananias.

Ananias hears the voice, turns, and looks up.

Ananias Here I am, Lord.

Jesus In the house of Judah awaits a man called Saul...

Ananias *(Shocked)* Saul of Tarsus is here?! Surely O Lord you protect your people from the snare of the wicked. I will leave town immediately.

Ananias begins throwing clothes into a bag as though he is setting out for a long trip.

Jesus Go to him...

Ananias *(Freezes)* Wait, what?

Jesus And pray for him so that he may regain his sight.

Beads of perspiration form on Ananias's forehead. He hesitates.

Ananias But he's come here with letters to arrest us!

Jesus I have chosen him to carry my name to the Gentiles. He will preach to kings and the sons of Israel.

Ananias bows his head.

Ananias Yes, Lord. Your will be done.

Narrator Ananias was afraid of Saul, but he obeyed the Lord's instruction. On Straight Street he found the house belonging to Judah, and in it, the man who had come to kill the church.

Ananias approaches Saul, carefully but with resolve.

Ananias Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, whom you met on the road, sent me so that you may see and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Ananias lays his hands on Saul's head.

Ananias In the name of Jesus, receive your sight!

Scales fall from Saul's eyes.

Saul *(Relieved)* I can see.

Saul sees is a nervous-looking man in front of him.

Saul You are Ananias? Your name means God's grace. It is by the grace of God that I have been saved.

Ananias The God of our ancestors has chosen you to be his witness. He will send you far away to bring the message of light to the Gentiles.

Saul *(Tilts head)* Did you say Gentiles?

Ananias You are in Damascus. You are surrounded by Gentiles. Get used to it.

Narrator That evening, the people of Damascus gathered to hear Saul speak.

Saul stands in front of a crowd, smiling.

Saul Brothers and fathers, I came here to arrest the followers of Jesus, but Jesus arrested me. Truly he is the Son of God!

Those listening are amazed.

Claudia Isn't this Saul, the man who hunts Christians?

Zeek *(Rolls eyes)* He's had too much sun. He's lost his mind.

Narrator Saul preached about Jesus for many days. He told people that God loved them, had forgiven all their sins, and wanted to welcome them into his family. Some believed him but others didn't.

Claudia *(Happy)* I never knew that God loved me just as I am.

Zeek *(Suspicious)* This Saul is trouble. Someone needs to shut him up.

Narrator Soon it became too dangerous for Saul to remain in the city.

Ananias *(To Saul)* The synagogue Jews are plotting to kill you. It's no longer safe for you here.

Saul nods solemnly.

- Saul** Those who hated Jesus, now they hate me. I will return to Jerusalem.
- Ananias** The Jews are watching the gates night and day, but I know how to get you out.
- Narrator** That night the disciples helped Saul escape by lowering him in a basket through a gap in the wall. When he arrived in Jerusalem, Saul looked for the disciples of Jesus, but they had hidden in fear.
- All** *(Panic)* Saul is here!
Draw the curtains, lock the doors.
Don't let him find us.

A door opens. A smiling, bearded man enters.

- Barnabas** Hello everybody, I brought a friend. His name is Saul.

Saul steps in after Barnabas.

- All** No! Barnabas – what have you done?!

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