



“This is the Story...”

Written by Talashia Keim Yoder and Daniel Yoder. Artwork by Christa and Jonathan Reuel.  
Song lyrics and music by Jonathan Reuel.

## **Week 48: Something Like Scales Fall**

Acts 9:1-22

### **Intro Video: COMING SOON!**

**Review the big story:** God created the cosmos and humans and called it all good. We were created to live in harmony, but sometimes we miss the mark. All of humanity missed the mark, and they had to live with the consequences, but God stuck with them and continued to love them. Then God called a family to be a blessing to the whole earth. Like the humans before them, the generations of this family often missed the mark, but God was faithful.

When the people became slaves, God raised up Moses to be their leader and delivered them. In the wilderness, they learned to be a people of God, trusting in God’s provision, living out God’s commandments, and wrestling with the law in shalom community. As they prepared to go into the promised land, they were given the shema, words of love to keep with their whole beings. God brought the people into the promised land. They continued to miss the mark, and God sent judges to guide them.

God raised up prophets, but the people demanded a king. Kings continued to miss the mark. The kingdom divided into the north and south. God stuck with the people through leaders and prophets, and continued to call the people back to God, even as first the northern, and then the southern kingdom fell to invading powers. Some of the people were sent into exile, and some were left in the ruins of the kingdom. Through prophets and everyday people, God continued to stick with the scattered people and to reveal that God is so much bigger than they imagined. The people were finally able to return to Jerusalem and to rebuild the temple.

The people of God began to wait for a Messiah. This Messiah was announced through an angel to Mary. Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem, and there, Jesus was born, proclaimed by angels, visited by shepherds, blessed by Simeon and Anna, and sought by magi. When Jesus’s life was in danger, his parents fled with him to Egypt, where they remained as refugees until it was safe for them to return and settle in Nazareth. When he was ready to begin his ministry, Jesus was baptized by his cousin John. Jesus called a community of people to follow him.

Jesus showed people what life inside the blessing looks like. He fulfilled the scriptures, walked on water, fed people, welcomed children, told stories, and showed us what was most important.

Jesus entered Jerusalem and was proclaimed as the Messiah. He angered people with his teachings. He was arrested and killed. The people had really missed the mark. But God stuck with them. God’s love is stronger than death. Jesus rose again. He walked, ate and talked with his friends. Then he ascended to heaven and told his disciples that they would receive power from the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit came upon the disciples at Pentecost. They told people about Jesus, and many people believed and were baptized. They lived in shalom community and followed Jesus, even when that meant persecution.

**Key verse:** Acts 9:4-5, Acts 9:15, Acts 9:18

**Tell the story:** Saul was a man who persecuted disciples of Jesus, because he thought that's what God was calling him to do. Jesus appeared to Saul in a unique way, then worked through a disciple named Ananias to help Saul see things in a new way. Saul began to proclaim Jesus as the Son of God, and became very important in helping spread the good news throughout the known world.

- Read Acts 9:1-22
- Read page 291 in the *Shine On* story Bible.

**Prime the pump:**

- **Things to notice:**
  - Notice what disciples are called in 9:2. This is the first time we've come across this description in our series, but it was a common name for the early followers.
  - This story talks a lot about sight and names. Trace these two themes throughout the story.
- **Background information:**
  - Saul's encounter with God includes elements that are common to divine encounters - flashing light, falling to the ground, double naming, and commissioning. Do you recognize any of these from other God-encounters we've talked about?
  - "Lord" in verse 5 is a title of respect/divinity, not a specific name for YHWH.
- **Conversation starters:**
  - Saul will tell his story in Acts 22:1-21 and Acts 26:9-18. Read these to see how he uses his experience to bring the good news of Jesus to others. Some in today's world would call this "bearing witness" or "giving testimony." What stories do you tell to communicate the gospel?
  - Why did God choose Saul? How do you imagine the other early followers of the Way might have felt when their persecutor was chosen for a special job? Can you think of other unlikely people that God has worked through?
  - In this story, as well as our story from last week and some upcoming stories, people are baptized immediately upon belief. This is different from many of our modern practices surrounding baptism. Wrestle with that.
  - Some of us grew up hearing that upon Saul's conversion, he was renamed "Paul." Notice that this is missing from the text. In fact, there's no change in name - these are two forms of the same name, and he casually begins being called Paul in Acts 13:9. Saul is the Jewish form of the name, and Paul is the Roman form, so being called "Paul" was similar to a person named Paul from the USA calling himself "Paulo" when he travels to a Spanish-speaking country.

**Microsong:** "Something Like Scales Fall" (Listen: <https://youtu.be/4innaJ9XtEM>)

Saul is traveling. A light shines all around he hears a voice calling his name.

In a vision God tells Ananias to go and pray for Saul. When he prays something like scales fall and Saul's no longer blind. When he prays something like scales fall...

**Sing the big song:** (Listen: <https://youtu.be/1XeqWERgQy0>)

This is the story of how it all began. God made matter, and chaos shattered.  
Eve and Adam, they tried to hide. The world got violent and God replied with a mark and a flood and  
a rainbow sign, God's love written on skin and sky,  
*And then God called a family to be a blessing to the earth, oh ohhhh*  
A mother and her favorite son wrestle for the blessing, another son becomes a slave, the land is  
saved from famine.  
God's family grows. Egypt oppresses. They groan to God and God sends Moses.  
*Ten strange signs say "Please release them!" By the sea God saves them. Oh ohhh.*  
The people complain and God rains bread. Daily food and ten new rules.  
Five sisters come and ask for land. God says "Yes, amend the law!"  
*Moses says, "In your new life across the Jordan, love God with your whole heart and with all your  
being, and your strength, now listen: God is One, only God! God is One, only God!"*  
Cross over Jordan, stories and stones. Circuits and shouts and the walls come down.  
God sends judges like Deborah and the land has rest.  
Ruth's worth more than seven sons; Redeem the lost with steadfast love.  
Corruption in the temple then God sends Samuel.  
God gives them a prophet, they ask for a king. Does God need a temple? A wise king forgets. And  
when a bully rules the land, the nation tears apart and loses David's heart...  
A widow's gift and a prophet's cry. God brings life in desperate times.  
Josiah reads this misplaced scroll. He turns to God wholeheartedly like David did. In his time.  
God gives Jeremiah a picture of God's ruined family...  
Is there any hope left, is there any hope left, is there any hope left for you, Jerusalem?  
Any hope? Any hope left? Is there any hope left for you?  
By the streams of Babylon, how can we sing when you are gone, Jerusalem...  
I'm in a valley of human bones. These bones are Israel, God's breath is hope.  
Haman plans death for Esther's exiles. She risks her life so they might survive.  
Finally God's family rebuilds the temple in Jerusalem. God plunges them into a sea of joy and  
celebration of Only God. God is One, Only God.  
Comfort to Jerusalem, your warfare finally ceases.  
Matthew lists these generations, Abraham to Jesus  
The angel says, "You'll have a son and God will give him David's throne." Mary says, "God looked at  
me, now I'm the luckiest person around.  
Mary, now pregnant fiancé, makes a grueling journey.  
She has her baby, shepherds see angels declaring God's glory and peace among people.  
The Spirit sends shepherds and elders and prophets to tell those who wait their Messiah has come.  
Herod gets nervous, the Magi find Jesus. They hide their discovery and hurry back home...  
Once again an angel comes to Joseph -- so they make good their escape, ooh.  
Jesus in the temple, astonishing the crowd. Jesus with his parents. Jesus growing up.  
Down by the Jordan with the prophet John, Jesus asks to be baptized. And the skies are opened. A  
dove descends. A voice from heaven says, "This is my son, the son I love. I'm pleased with him."  
Jesus calls disciples to be with him in the work he's doing. Ohhh oohhh.  
Jesus teaches the disciples "This is life inside the blessing: You're blessed, you who are empty.  
You're blessed all you who mourn. You're blessed, you who ache for God, whose inner life is  
pure. This is life inside the blessing."  
Jesus walks on the water. Peter tries and begins to sink. Jesus grabs his hand and the wind dies  
down.  
Jesus sees the crowds with compassion. So he teaches them for days and days. The people are  
hungry. There's baskets left over and no one left out.  
People bring their children to Jesus. Jesus blesses them and says, "You must accept God's good  
government like a little child would or you won't get in at all" This is life inside the blessing. Ooh  
ooh.

What's most important? Love God with everything and love your neighbor, whoever that may be.

Jesus tells Martha, "You're upset about many things; Just one thing's essential; it's what Mary's choosing here." Life inside the blessing, life inside the blessing.

Save now, David's son rides on a donkey. He will judge nations, separate the sheep from goats. In the garden Jesus prays "Yes, father, if there's no other way." Jesus dies. The veil rips. . . "Surely this was God's kid."

Mary is crying, the tomb is empty. Jesus meets her and speaks her name. Jesus appears to many of his close friends, breaks bread with them, shows them his scarred hands. While he blesses them he's carried up to heaven after he asks them to wait in Jerusalem.

Together in one place, sound of wind and tongues of fire.

The place where they're praying's shaken and everyone's filled with God's breath. They have one heart and soul and no one claims for themselves alone what they own. Stephen sees Jesus and asks him not to charge his killers with their sin, with their sin.

Saul is traveling. A light shines all around, he hears a voice calling his name. In a vision God tells Ananias to go and pray for Saul. When he prays something like scales fall and Saul's no longer blind.

*God loves every one of us, it's true. And God loves the universe.*

**Go do your household project!**