

A Chosen Instrument

Acts 9:19-31

Saul has experienced metanoia (he has been changed).

Luke's emphasis

- The genuineness of Saul's conversion. Yes, you heard that correctly, the same Saul.
- Saul's proclamation that Jesus is the Son of God (Messiah) in the synagogues.
- He will now become the persecuted because of his preaching.

vs. 22, Saul grew stronger

Question: How has God uniquely gifted you? Are you growing stronger in your faith? Is your commitment and curiosity towards the things of Jesus and God's kingdom increasing?

vs. 23, After many days had passed -> 3 years after his conversion.

Galatians 1:18 Then after three years I did go up to Jerusalem to get to know Cephas, and I stayed with him fifteen days. **19** But I didn't see any of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother. **20** I declare in the sight of God: I am not lying in what I write to you.

Possible timeline

Saul's conversion (9:1-19)

Preaching in synagogues in Damascus (9:19-22)

Prolonged residence in Arabia (Galatians 1:15-17)

Return to Damascus (9:23-25)

First visit to Jerusalem (3 years after conversion).

Continuing to Caesarea (9:26-30)

Tarsus, Syria, and Cilicia (9:30; Galatians 1:18-24)

What did Saul mean by using the phrase Son of God?

The most appropriate background when applied to Jesus was Messiah.

OT -> Used for those who belong to God, to Israel (most commonly), and to a righteous person in general.

The prophets recognized the promise to David (2 Samuel 7:16) and Isaiah spoke of him as mighty God (Isaiah 9:6-7).

Emphasis is given to enthronement.

Psalm 2 -> the point is that through Israel's Messiah, God will reach out to the Gentiles, giving this King the nations of the world.

The **NT** adds insight and understanding not only to the OT emphasis on enthronement, but on the complete identity of Jesus (his hypostasis / hypostatic union -> the union of Jesus' humanity and divinity in one person).

Romans 1:3-4 concerning his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who was a descendant of David according to the flesh **4** and was appointed to be the powerful Son of God according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection of the dead.

Romans 8:3-4 For what the law could not do since it was weakened by the flesh, God did. He condemned sin in the flesh by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh as a sin offering, **4** in order that the law's requirement would be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Romans 8:32 What, then, are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? **32** He did not even spare his own Son but gave him up for us all. How will he not also with him grant us everything?

Galatians 4:4 When the time came to completion, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law,

Hebrews 1:5, 5:5 For to which of the angels did he ever say, You are my Son; today I have become your Father, or again, I will be his Father, and he will be my Son?

5 In the same way, Christ did not exalt himself to become a high priest, but God who said to him, You are my Son; today I have become your Father,

- “The king represents his people. What happens to him, happens to them, and vice versa.
- God has sent ‘wisdom’ into the world, ‘wisdom’ who is God’s second self, the ‘wisdom’ through which God made the world in the first place.
- The NT writers are highlighting the deeper truth of Jesus. The Messiah, when he came, would be God’s own second self, God in human form, wisdom incarnate.” ~ NT Wright

Question: How has Jesus changed your life? What areas of your life do you need to fully surrender to him? How can you create a practice of thanksgiving and confession?

Jesus is in the process of making all things new!

vs. 23-25, Saul’s escape

2 Corinthians 11:32-33 In Damascus, a ruler under King Aretas guarded the city of Damascus in order to arrest me. **33** So I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall and escaped from his hands.

Nabatean Arabia

vs. 26, When he arrived in Jerusalem.

Acts 23:16 But the son of Paul’s sister, hearing about their ambush, came and entered the barracks and reported it to Paul.

vs. 27, Barnabas -> advocate, peacemaker, willing to use his relational capital.

Question: How can you be a Barnabas in your everyday relationships?

vs. 28-29, What did Saul do in Jerusalem?

He conversed and debated with the Hellenistic Jews.

6:9 Opposition arose, however, from some members of the Freedmen’s Synagogue, and they began to argue with Stephen.

6:12 they came, seized him, and took him to the Sanhedrin.

Paul goes back to the Hellenistic (Freedmen’s) Synagogue.
Can you imagine?

Paul’s perspective

Acts 22:17-21 “After I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance **18** and saw him telling me, ‘Hurry and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me.’ **19** “But I said, ‘Lord, they know that in synagogue after synagogue I had those who believed in you imprisoned and beaten. **20** And when the blood of your witness Stephen was being shed, I stood there giving approval and guarding the clothes of those who killed him.’ **21** “He said to me, ‘Go, because I will send you far away to the Gentiles.’”

Paul steps into a space Stephen occupied.

Thanksgiving and Confession

vs. 30, Let’s not get into a situation where we see the death of Stephen repeated in Saul.