

**“Saul, A Chosen Instrument”
God’s Purpose in Conversion:
Acts 9:1-19, Part 2
Acts 9:10-19, Jerry Grey**

READ TEXT: Acts 9:10-19

Introduction:

Let's pretend it's 1940. You have moved to the outskirts of Vienna, Austria. The Nazis have occupied the beloved city you once called home. Now the entire country has fallen under Nazi occupation. You are Jewish. Most of your relatives have vanished - arrested secretly in the cover of darkness by armed soldiers. You've made the painful decision to gather your family and flee your comfortable home near the city of your birth and take refuge in a remote cottage far away in the mountains.

The night before the planned escape, you're awakened by a strange presence in your bedroom. Rubbing your eyes, you apprehensively sit up in bed and try to focus your thoughts. Am I dreaming? Fear grips you. Then out of the darkness comes an unrecognizable voice saying. “Arise, go to a street named Wickenburg, just to the west of the campus of the University of Vienna. There you will find a home owned by Franz Kaiser. When you enter there, you'll find a man from Braunau, upper Austria. His name is Adolf Hitler. I have appeared to him, and he is now praying. He is blind, and I revealed myself to him. Go, and touch him; and he will regain his eyesight, and he will save your people.”

You sit stunned, desperately trying to make sense of what you just heard. You can scarcely believe the command. Vienna is crawling with grim-faced Nazis carrying loaded weapons. Their orders are to seek out and capture Jews. Perhaps it's a setup or a tasteless practical joke. No. The voice was real. The command clear.

Here's the question: Would you go? Would you believe that what you heard was true? Can you imagine yourself coming out of hiding and risking life and limb to find your way down a dark Vienna street and knock on the door of a home you've never visited? Don't answer that just yet.

Context:

We now turn our attention to a little man with a big God. Many times we neglect to see some of the best of God's servants. Philip, Timothy, Titus, Barnabas, and now, Ananias, etc. Even Paul had to start at point 1 and be discipled. The greatest Christian in the NT was once a baby Christian. Paul was once a big man with a little life. Now he is going to be a little man with a big life.

Quote: Dr. Rogers said a wise man once said, "You know that when little men cast long shadows, the sun is about to set."

Read Text: 10-19

Verse 10:

Johnny Hunt says each Christian should have a:

- a. Paul above him
- b. A Timothy below him
- c. A Barnabas beside him

Question:

If you lived in Damascus, would God have given you a call about Saul? **Have you discovered your purpose in salvation???**

~ Ananias was a mature believer. Called a disciple. Could Bro. Jerry call you a disciple.

According to Acts 9:10, Ananias was living in Damascus. In Paul's speech in Acts 22, he describes Ananias as "a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews" that dwelt in Damascus (Acts 22:12). According to

F. F. Bruce, this indicates that he was not one of the refugees from the persecution in Jerusalem described in Acts 8:1 (Wikipedia).

- He was mature
- He was filled
- He was Obedient/faithful
- He was polished
- He was courageous
- He was ordinary and in obscurity
- What a guy. He was chosen to disciple Saul.

Illustration: There are people here who have life situations from which they were saved, and when they get saved, I get them together with a person that has a similar background.

If Paul described you and me after his conversion, what would he say about us? Are you fulfilling God's call on your life?

* In a word, "He beat Saul to the throne. He was saved before Saul was" How many of us wish we could go back and start over? We would all come to Christ quicker, right? "Wasted time?"

Take heart! Look how God used Saul after he surrendered.

Joel 2:25-27

"I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten—
the great locust and the young locust,
the other locusts and the locust swarm—
my great army that I sent among you.

²⁶ You will have plenty to eat, until you are full,
and you will praise the name of the Lord your God,
who has worked wonders for you;
never again will my people be shamed.

²⁷ Then you will know that I am in Israel,
that I am the Lord your God,

and that there is no other;
never again will my people be shamed.

Note:

- God knew Ananias
- God knew where he was
- God knew what he was doing
- God knew he could be trusted with Saul.

That's a real disciple!

Greek: He was a “Disciple.”

One of the most popular words in the New Testament.

μαθητής - One who is a pupil or learner. However, it carries with it a greater meaning. “It is an adherent who accepts the instruction given to him and makes it his rule of conduct.

In other words – a disciple is one who practices what he preaches. Discipleship is proof of salvation. God used a true disciple to do His will who simply said, “Yes, Lord.” Let’s do the same.

Where do you find disciples? At school, e.g. Sunday School. If you don’t go to school, are you really a disciple?

If Charlie, Sanford, Carroll, Ryan, Amy, Jeanne, Brian, Charlie, Selena, Michala, Bro Jerry teach awesome lessons on Sunday and you are not in school, do you benefit?

Some of us need to catch consumption.

As to the vision! Does God do this today?

In my opinion, No! **Hebrews 1** tells us God speaks through the Son. **1 Corinthians 13:9-10**, we know in part, and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears.

The Word of God that has come is **“The Perfect.”**

Quote: Swindoll says he doesn't believe that God speaks to us in visions today like he did in the bible days. Then he quotes the exact passage I have shared with you.

Hebrew 1:1-4

1 Long ago God spoke to the fathers by the prophets at different times and in different ways. **2** In these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son. God has appointed Him heir of all things and made the universe^[a] through Him. **3** The Son is the radiance^[b] of God's glory and the exact expression^[c] of His nature, sustaining all things by His powerful word. After making purification for sins,^[d] He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.^[e] **4** So He became higher in rank than the angels, just as the name He inherited is superior to theirs.

1 Cor 13:9-10

Love never ends.
 But as for prophecies,
 they will come to an end;
 as for languages, they will cease;
 as for knowledge, it will come to an end.
9 For we know in part,
 and we prophesy in part.
10 But when the perfect comes,
 the partial will come to an end.

Verse 11:

This is what happens when a man is blind and humble – he prays. **“I bet he was praying.”** I know many people who need to listen more. Pastor included.

When God really speaks to you about your sin and being on the wrong road, what happens? People who get visions are always giving friendly messages. Their visions are always upbeat and happy. We are always being blessed, and God is pleased with us.

Some people like that kind of church. Some people like to be lied to.

If the Lord sends me to talk to Saul, He will get the truth. **So will you.**

This also happened to Daniel: In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia, a message was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar. The message was true and was about a great conflict. He understood the message and had understanding of the vision.

² In those days I, Daniel, was mourning for three full weeks. ³ I didn't eat any rich food, no meat or wine entered my mouth, and I didn't put any oil on my body until the three weeks were over. ⁴ On the twenty-fourth day of the first month,^[a] as I was standing on the bank of the great river, the Tigris, ⁵ I looked up, and there was a man dressed in linen, with a belt of gold from Uphaz^[b] around his waist. ⁶ His body was like topaz,^[c] his face like the brilliance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and feet like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude.

⁷ Only I, Daniel, saw the vision. The men who were with me did not see it, but a great terror fell on them, and they ran and hid. ⁸ I was left alone, looking at this great vision. No strength was left in me; my face grew deathly pale,^[d] and I was powerless. ⁹ I heard the words he said, and when I heard them I fell into a deep sleep,^[e] with my face to the ground.

Should Daniel deliver the message as given? Should he lie so that he doesn't hurt the King's feeling? Should Ananias lie to Saul? Should I lie to you because all the other preachers in the modern church lie?

Illustration: Read 1 Kings 22 Jehoshaphat, Ahab and Micaiah, and the 400 lying prophets. Micaiah and Ananias are the same!!! Obedient disciples.

Illustration: What do you think Saul was praying?

Maybe prayers of forgiveness about Stephen? Maybe the faces of those whom he had killed came to mind. Maybe all the wasted years in Judaism and the late nights of study that never led him to Jesus came to mind.

* God hears the faintest cry for repentance. If he heard a murderer, He will hear you.

When a man is in this kind of shape, and under this kind of conviction, and devastated because of his iniquity, and you want me to lie to him about what's going on? **You want me to give a message of peace when there is no peace. When this man is so close to the life-saving message of the Gospel, and I'm supposed to lie to him about his iniquity and who he really is before God? That's what people want me to do? You want a "feel-good-message" so you can go to hell from a happier place? No, I will not do it.** I will tell you and Saul the truth. So that he can be saved.

Contrast the two men. Saul is not listening and see what God did to get his attention. Now Ananias was listening and was exalted, not humbled. Is there a lesson here?

Here is the question of the day: When God calls you to speak for Him, what is your answer? I like the translation at the end of verse 10 that says it this way... Ananias! Yes, Lord, here am I. Or simply, Yes, Lord. Ananias made himself available. He didn't just state his location. "Here I am, Lord." Here am I is a better translation.

Verse 12: God always prepares the way when He sends you to do a task. Nothing out of the ordinary is happening here. This is quite normal in the workings of God. He gave a man an assignment and prepared the way for him.

God also prepared Saul for the man who would be coming and even revealed his name to Saul. This is not as charismatic as preachers make this out to be. God does this with me every day of my life, and especially as I prepare sermons and preach. All the while, never hearing an audible voice or having any metaphysical spooky experiences. Ananias was obedient, with a few questions.

What we do know is that Ananias was used to talking to Jesus. When you spend time with Jesus talking, you hear Him better.

The message was clear. The message was from God. The message didn't contradict the known scriptures of the day.

The very thing that Saul hated was the Christian way. Now he will experience the healing power of Jesus. An encounter with Christ changes your feelings towards Christ.

- * Saul is an empty vessel ready to be filled. Saul experiences the benefits of a personal relationship with Jesus. That changes everything. If it doesn't, you have not been changed. I WATCH PEOPLE ALL THE TIME. I see a people focused on the pettiness of life. The real spiritual issues of Life are not prioritized. People care more about a missed spelled word in a prayer request than the person we are praying for.

- * When we come to Christ, it all gets cleared up. Questions answered, truth revealed. This is a unique conversion experience without denominational or religious influence. Just Saul, Ananias, and Jesus. How do we know Saul was saved. We see his obedience. That's why I am so worried about some of

you. What will God have to do to get us in the same place as Saul. Ready for obedience.

Illustration: Have you ever lost your sight? I lost sight in my right eye once. Terrifying. Get everybody to close their eyes. While your eyes are closed, your other senses come alive. **Humbled men are not distracted.** God knows how to make a man contemplative. I'm not saying that we need to be miserable and forlorn all the time, but I am saying that God has a way to focus us and make us serious when the Lord wants to speak. Christianity is not all about comfort, cash, and Cadillacs.

Illustration: Someone texted me after Wed bible study last week. The teachings on the tongue had spoken to that person greatly. He's a true disciple. How do I know. He was convicted and is trying to fix it. He left the service with a passion to repent. That's a true disciple.

What happened to Isaiah when He saw the Lord?

Isiah 6:1-8

6 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne, and His robe^[a] filled the temple. ² Seraphim^[b] were standing above Him; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³ And one called to another:

Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of Hosts;
His glory fills the whole earth.

4 The foundations of the doorways shook at the sound of their voices, and the temple was filled with smoke.

5 Then I said:

Woe is me for I am ruined^[c]
because I am a man of unclean lips
and live among a people of unclean lips,

and because my eyes have seen the King,
the LORD of Hosts.

⁶ Then one of the seraphim flew to me, and in his hand was a glowing coal that he had taken from the altar with tongs. ⁷ He touched my mouth with it and said:
Now that this has touched your lips,
your wickedness is removed
and your sin is atoned for.

⁸ Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying:
Who should I send?
Who will go for Us?
I said:

Here I am. Send me.

*When a lost man is saved, he immediately realizes all he has been missing. When a saved man has an encounter with God. He usually ends up on his face.

* “Faith Point” – God knows how to prepare the heart. Saul was so rebellious that God had to blind him to get his full attention.

How about you?

Verse 13-14:

This is the difference between *clarification* and *rebellion*.

* Ananias just wants to make sure. Remember – this is like God sending you and me to touch Osama Bin Laden or Hitler. Ananias was not questioning God as much as he was making sure He got the right Word from God.

Apokrinomai- to judge. To begin to speak when something has proceeded to which the remarks have occurred. What preceded here was contemplation on the part of Ananias. It’s called evaluation or *thinking*. When God speaks to you think about what is said. **Kakas**- bad stuff. I heard about this dude.

Verse 14: Look at this big man in a heap of misery. He has authority. Not anymore. He has friends in high places. Not anymore. He has killing power. Not anymore. He hates Christians and can put them in jail. No anymore.

1 Corinthians 10:9-10

Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the serpents. Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer.

Proverbs 18:12

Verse Concepts

Before destruction the heart of man is haughty,
But humility goes before honor.

Isaiah 59:7

Their feet run to evil,
And they hasten to shed innocent blood;
Their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity,
Devastation and destruction are in their highways.

Proverbs 29:1

Whoever remains stiff-necked after many rebukes will suddenly be destroyed—without remedy.

Verses 15-16: As we make our way through Acts, this job description will be revealed to us right from the page. Do you remember how I started this message 2 weeks ago? Remember, I told you Saul was a chosen, elected vessel?

Here is his job description:

C. S. Lewis- *A proud man is always looking down on things and people, and of course, as long as you're looking down, you can't see something that is above you.*

Greek: Chosen- εκλογη, chosen or election. By divine selection.

Greek: Vessel, σκευος, – Implement, a **hollow** vessel for containing things. Can be a human body. Wife or the mast of a ship. Chief instrument in sailing. A sail, goods, implement, or a piece of equipment.

1 Peter 3:7

Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker **vessel**, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

1 Thessalonians 4:4

That every one of you should know how to possess his **vessel** in sanctification and honour...

2 Timothy 2:20

But in a great house there are not only **vessels** of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour.

A clay jar. Chosen for salvation. Chosen by Jesus. Chosen for a purpose. Chosen for holiness. Chosen for suffering.

2 Cor 4:7 ⁷ But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.

You may have never understood this, but God knew you from eternity past. You were chosen. He called you. And It makes sense that if you are chosen, then you will be called. If you are called, you will be justified. If you are justified, you will be glorified. All for a purpose.

What a job description – What a ministry – How many TV Evangelist would use this line to get converts. None.

? Today it's all easy believeism. Paul was called to suffer!

* We are required to tell people that Christianity is not just hell insurance. It's hard work being Holy. It's hard to follow Christ. It's not easy being ridiculed. Not easy doing evangelism and ministry. Difficult working spiritual virtues into your life. Trials, troubles, pain, suffering.

Chosen Instrument – A vessel for use. A ship's mast. If you are called to your purpose, you will never be content, and your life will not be satisfying at all.

Acts 13:36

⁶ “Now when David had served **God's purpose** in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his ancestors and his body decayed.

Romans 8:29

⁹ For those God foreknew he also predestined **to be conformed to the image of his Son**, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

God's purpose for us: If you need something to do!!! Salvation, sanctification, Carry His name, servants for our generation. Discipleship, Obedience, faith, and service.

Point of Note:

If God chooses us, He has a job for us. Romans 8:28 (29).

- * Church growth principle #1 “Carry His Name.” **Bastazo**- to carry, to proclaim, to announce or publish. This is an *epexegetical* word that gives us the meaning and purpose of the **σκεῦος** (vessel)- Rogers.
- * Paul went before (Carried the name) the Gentiles, Kings and rulers of Israel. In my opinion, he even made it to Ceasar. When we are called, we are called to God's purposes, not ours.

- * Paul suffered greatly for the cause of Christ. **Bastazo**, metaphorically refers to suffering or burdens. To bear up the cross.

Philippians 3:10

“I want to know him in the power of His Resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering.” Becoming like Him in His death and so to obtain to the resurrection of the dead.

Persecution, suffering, proves our family resemblance. Suffering produces holiness.

1 Peter 1:7

That the trial of your faith, being much more **precious** than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: (Romans 5:1-5)

2 Tim 1:8

8 So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God,
NIV

2 Tim 1:11-12

11 And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. 12 That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.
NIV

2 Cor 11:21-33

What anyone else dares to boast about — I am speaking as a fool — I also dare to boast about. 22 Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are

they Israelites? So am I. Are they Abraham's descendants? So am I. 23 Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. 24 Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, 26 I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. 27 I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. 28 Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. 29 Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn?

30 If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. 31 The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, who is to be praised forever, knows that I am not lying. 32 In Damascus the governor under King Aretas had the city of the Damascenes guarded in order to arrest me. 33 But I was lowered in a basket from a window in the wall and slipped through his hands. **Acts**

9:25
NIV

Verse 17:

God gave Ananias info that was not told him by others. He knows what happened to Saul. "Brother Saul," Just in case you missed it – it was **Jesus** who appeared to you on the road. Saul is now a true Apostle. The Lord appeared to him. Saul was given his sight and the filling of the Holy Spirit. He made the best of it, too.

I may not be much, but I think I can handle a blind dude even if he's armed. Ananias is safe.

- ~Goes to the house
- ~Enters the house.
- ~Puts his hands on Saul.
- ~Calls Him Brother
- ~Addresses Him. The Lord Jesus! Sent me
- ~He's the one who blinded you while you were on **your own** journey.
- ~I am here to give you your sight back. Wow! Awesome.
- ~He was filled with the HS.
- ~He got up and was baptized. Baptism follows conversion, and conversion only. Baptism does not have to be done over and over, and it never washes you from sin or restores you to favor with God. Your baptism is a profession of faith. No church can tell me that they properly counseled 200 hundred people for baptism in an instant. Saul was ready for profession and baptism. 45 thousand were baptized on the beach. Who counseled these folks? Saul was properly disciplined by Ananias.

Verse 18:

-The scales were removed- εσθεως, immediately.

- **scales, lepis, hos** (something like). A rine, husks, to peel, to strip off. Aristotel and Herodotus spoke of this word in this context. Something is stripped off or peeled off like scales.

My prayer for those who do not know Him – God will remove the blinders. If Ananias came to you and prayed for you, and gave you information about what happened on your Damascus road, you would forever be indebted to him. By the way, no major apostle baptized Saul. It was Ananias. He was also the first to begin the discipling process. Many people will come alongside you when you are converted and help you understand what happened. Can you think of any? What's their names? Runy, Mike Broadwater, Steve Hartman, John Bryan, singles ministry at CBC. I am indebted.

Verse 19:

All returns to normal when the Spirit is right. When the spiritual life is good, everything is well.

Closing:

How to pray for the lost:

1. God will interrupt their lives.
2. Holy Spirit will draw and convict.
3. Crush their pride.
4. Circumstances will lineup for sharing.
5. God will remove the blinders.
6. Truth will be revealed.

Illustration: I have seen the piles and heaps of humanity that were humbled and broken by God for service. God wants your purpose to be known, understood, and worked out.

My Dad was a Saul. You should have seen what God did to him to humble him down. It was sad. When God called me, I came willingly and humble. Just come. Don't make God come get you off the road to nowhere.