



'Acts' - Extra Teaching Points #11

Acts 9:10-42 (NASB)

Pages 142-155 in 'Acts For Everyone' (Part 1) by N. T. Wright

Acts 9:10-31

Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and the Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord." ¹¹ And the Lord said to him, "Get up and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying, ¹² and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him, so that he might regain his sight." ¹³ But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he did to Your saints at Jerusalem; ¹⁴ and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name." ¹⁵ But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; ¹⁶ for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake." ¹⁷ So Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." ¹⁸ And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he got up and was baptized; ¹⁹ and he took food and was strengthened. Now for several days he was with the disciples who were at Damascus, ²⁰ and **immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God."** ²¹ All those hearing him continued to be amazed, and were saying, "Is this not he who in Jerusalem destroyed those who called on this name, and who had come here for the purpose of bringing them bound before the chief priests?" ²² But Saul kept increasing in strength and confounding the Jews who lived at Damascus **by proving that this Jesus is the Christ.** ²³ When many days had elapsed, the Jews plotted together to do away with him, ²⁴ but their plot became known to Saul. They were also watching the gates day and night so that they might put him to death; ²⁵ but his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a large basket. ²⁶ When he came to Jerusalem, he was trying to associate with the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. ²⁷ But Barnabas took hold of him and brought him to the apostles and described to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had talked to him,

and how at Damascus he had spoken out boldly in the name of Jesus. ²⁸ And he was with them, moving about freely in Jerusalem, speaking out boldly in the name of the Lord. ²⁹ And he was talking and arguing with the Hellenistic Jews; but they were attempting to put him to death. ³⁰ But when the brethren learned of it, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him away to Tarsus. ³¹ So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase.

Q: What is so significant about Saul "immediately" beginning to "proclaim Jesus"?

- Saul knew that his old life had prepared him for what was coming next; but that old life was over now.
 - Being a hard-line, fanatical, ultra-nationalist, super-orthodox Pharisaic Jew, equipped Saul with a superior knowledge of the scriptures and a reputation of being a trustworthy teacher of the Law.
 - His knowledge of scripture allowed him to recognize Jesus as the "Son of God" and the promised "Messiah", and to prove it to others.
 - His reputation made his conversion impossible to dismiss.
- Saul burned the bridges to everything he had worked so hard for, and left everything behind to fulfill the mission Jesus gave him.
 - To proclaim Jesus meant he was adding his name to the list of those the High Priest was arresting.
 - All his friends, family, and fellow Pharisees would mark him as a traitor to the nation and the faith... he could never go back to his old life!

Q: Verse 20 is the first time in Acts that Luke records Saul calling Jesus the "Son of God." Does this mean Jesus was created by God like a father creates a son?

- Jesus existed from the beginning as the Word ([John 1:1; 8:57](#)), so He wasn't created at His birth.
 - Part of the reason Jesus was born of a virgin was because He already existed, and only needed a body.
- Saul used the title "Son of God" the way the scriptures used it, not so much to establish paternity, but as a description of the Messiah and what God was doing through Him.

- **2 Samuel 7:12-16** *When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom.* ¹³ *He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.* ¹⁴ **I will be his father, and he will be my son.** *When he does wrong, I will punish him with a rod wielded by men, with floggings inflicted by human hands.* ¹⁵ *But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you.* ¹⁶ **Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.’**”

Q: Why does Saul get so excited about telling everyone, and proving from scriptures, that Jesus is the “Son of God” and the “Christ” (Messiah)?

- One of the other scriptures Saul would have been referencing by saying Jesus was the “Son of God”, was Psalm 2:1-8 which identifies the “Son of God” as the king God would establish and give an inheritance to.
 - **Ps. 2:1-8** *Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain?* ² *The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the LORD and against his anointed, saying,* ³ *“Let us break their chains and throw off their shackles.”* ⁴ *The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them.* ⁵ *He rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying,* ⁶ *“I have installed my king on Zion, my holy mountain.”* ⁷ *I will proclaim the LORD’S decree: He said to me, “**You are my son; today I have become your father.**”* ⁸ **Ask me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.**
 - “The whole point is that, through Israel’s Messiah, God will reach out to the Gentiles, giving this King the nations of the world (not just the holy land, we note) as his ‘inheritance.’” P. 149
 - “In other words, invoking Psalm 2 doesn’t just give you a sense of the Messiah, the true anointed king, as God’s ‘son’. It fits in perfectly with the typically Jewish notion, which was the foundation of Paul’s missionary vocation, **that when God does for Israel what he’s going to do for Israel, then the nations will come under his judging and saving rule.**” P. 149

Q: Why should we be so excited about Jesus being the “Son of God” and “Messiah?”

- “In and through all of this, the messianic meaning of ‘son of God’ was steadily being fused with the Israel meaning: the king represents his people, so that he can and must stand in for them. **Whatever happens to him, happens to them, and vice versa.**” P. 150
- **Romans 8:14-17** *For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.* ¹⁵ *For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but **you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!”*** ¹⁶ *The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,* ¹⁷ **and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.**
- **Matt. 5:5** *“**Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.**”*

Acts 9:32-42

Now as Peter was traveling through all those regions, **he came down also to the saints** who lived at Lydda. ³³ There he found a man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden eight years, for he was paralyzed. ³⁴ Peter said to him, “Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; get up and make your bed.” Immediately he got up. ³⁵ And all who lived at Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord. ³⁶ Now in Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (which translated in Greek is called Dorcas); this woman was abounding with deeds of kindness and charity which she continually did. ³⁷ And it happened at that time that she fell sick and died; and when they had washed her body, they laid it in an upper room. ³⁸ Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, having heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him, imploring him, “Do not delay in coming to us.” ³⁹ So Peter arose and went with them. When he arrived, they brought him into the upper room; and all the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing all the tunics and garments that Dorcas used to make while she was with them. ⁴⁰ But Peter sent them all out and knelt down and prayed, and turning to the body, he said, “Tabitha, arise.” And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up. ⁴¹ And he gave her his hand and raised her up; and calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. ⁴² It became known all over Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. ⁴³ And Peter stayed many days in Joppa with a tanner named Simon.

Q: Who are the “saints” who lived at Lydda? Were they “super Christians”? If not, why doesn’t Luke just call them “the church”?

- “Note, incidentally, how Luke here and elsewhere, still not often using the word ‘church’ to describe Jesus’ followers, has taken to describing them as ‘God’s people’, which is how I’ve translated a word which literally means ‘the holy ones’ or ‘the saints’. The force of the word is that **these are the people whom God is setting apart as belonging specially to himself, called for his particular purposes.**” P. 153-154
- All Christians are “saints.”

Q: Why does Peter heal Aeneas and Dorcas, and not everyone?

- First, his mission was not to heal everyone so they could enjoy this world, but to show God’s power and demonstrate what the New Earth would be like.
- Second, ordinary people like Aeneas and Dorcas are not ordinary to God.
 - “When we tell the story of the great sweep of God’s purposes in history, there are, at every point, the Aeneases and the Dorcases who smile out of the pages at us, like the robin in the garden, and remind us of what it’s really all about.” P. 155

Follow Up Assignment

Q: God used Saul’s life experiences to specifically equip him for the gospel mission, just like He did with the apostles and everybody today who comes to Jesus. How does your past life prepare you for the gospel mission?

- Saul burned the bridges to everything he had worked so hard for, and left everything behind to fulfill the mission Jesus gave him. Have you burned your bridges? If not, what bridges are still standing?

Q: If Jesus, the Son of God and Messiah, has been given all the nations and the ends of the earth as His inheritance ([Ps. 2:1-8](#)), and we are fellow heirs with Christ ([Ro. 8:14-17](#)), what does this mean?

- Is this inheritance for now or later?
- How should this inheritance affect the way we live now?

Q: Who are the Aeneases and Dorcases around you?

- If God does not see them as ordinary, how should you see them?
- How can you show them they are not ordinary or unimportant this week?