

At What Point was Saul Saved?

Knowing when one has been saved from their sins is very important for their peace of mind and confidence in the promises of God. Some believe they are saved by being born into a believing family and having water sprinkled upon them to remove original sin. Others think they can say a prayer and accept Jesus as their personal Savior. Still some believe that the Holy Spirit has a direct role in their conversion. Finally, there are those who believe they are saved at the point of being baptized into water to wash away their sins. What did Saul (later known as the apostle Paul) believe?

Saul Was Not Saved When He Was a Devout Jew

Saul was a very devout and religious man when he met the Lord on the road to Damascus. If anyone had the right to boast about this, Saul could (Phil. 3:5,6). He had been educated at the feet of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). He was zealous for the traditions of the Jews (Gal. 1:14; Phil. 3:5; Rom. 10:1). He was of the strictest sect of the Jews - a pharisee of pharisees (Acts 26:5). He was on the fast tract among his fellow Jews (Gal. 1:14). The High Priest and Jewish leaders gave him letters of authority to encourage him in his persecution of Christians (Acts 9:1,2). He believed the Old Testament message, *“believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets”* (Acts 24:14). Nevertheless, the Law of Moses had been done away with, for God had *“taken..out of the way, having nailed it to the cross”* (Col. 2:14). Without Jesus the devout, very religious Saul was lost in his sins.

It has been well said, “God has no grandchildren.” Faith in Christ must be personal

and individual. No one can inherit their faith or religion from their parents. Saul saw the need to reject the religion of his ancestors and be converted, so must all men.

Saul Was Not Saved When He Prayed

The Lord told Ananias, the preacher, to *“arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying”* (Acts 9:11). Some have alleged that it was through Saul's fervent prayers over these three days which lead to his salvation. He was never told by God or Ananias to pray. Jesus told him to go and wait in Damascus for someone to come and tell him what to do. When Ananias came to Saul, he did not tell him to keep on praying or to stop praying, because his sins have been washed away in prayer. He command Saul saying, *“and now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord”* (Acts 22:16). Saul was to *“arise”* probably, because he was in a position of prayer. Why would Ananias tell Saul to stop praying, if that was God's way of saving him? If Saul was saved by praying, than he was saved before he was told what he must do (Acts 9:6); before his sins were washed away (Acts 22:16); and before he was in Christ (Gal. 3:27).

If Saul was not saved when he prayed, why was he praying? Perhaps he needed to repent in his heart by contemplating the seriousness of his sinful condition. Repentance is the resolution to quit sin and to obey God.

If Saul was not saved by prayer, why does Jesus mention his praying. God does not hear the prayers of sinners (Psalm 68:18; Prov. 28:9). God also noted the prayer life of Cornelius, but still had him send for Peter to tell him words by which he and his household were saved. Of a certainty, the book of Acts shows no pattern of alien sinners praying for salvation. No passage

outside Acts teaches alien sinners to pray for salvation.

Saul Was Not Saved by the Miraculous Appearance of Jesus or by the Holy Spirit

Saul was not saved when he was miraculously healed of his blindness. When God sent Ananias, he restore Saul's sight (Acts 22:12-13). In Acts 9:17-18, it was described as scales falling away. The first object of Ananias' being sent to Saul was that he might receive his sight. This would be to Saul an unmistakable proof that Ananias was the special messenger of Jesus to tell him what to do. The second object of Ananias' visit was to tell Saul to be baptized. Those who teach that miraculous healing will save - are wrong! Evidence of a miracle is not evidence of salvation.

Saul was not saved, when he was filled with the Holy Spirit. *“Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, ‘Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit’”* (Acts 9:17). Nothing is said as to when, how or by whom Paul was filled with the Holy Spirit. Holy Spirit was not conveyed to the penitent Hebrew by means of Ananias' hands. Ananias was not an apostle and did not have such authority. Saul being filled with the Holy Spirit could only be provided directly by the Lord Himself (Matthew 3:11; Acts 2:33; 2 Corinthians 11:5; 12:11). The idea of salvation requiring a miracle, a direct operation of the Spirit or some other experience of grace as an invention of men. They are not part of the process of conversion.

Saul Was Not Saved Before His Baptism

When was Saul saved? Was Saul saved when he saw the vision? It is oft maintained that Saul's conversion occurred on the road to

Damascus. It was not when he called Jesus "Lord." The title "Lord" was employed at this point as a mere term of respect, for he knew not who had addressed him.

Was Saul saved when he believed? Many contend that one is saved at the point of believing. Their definition of believing is the mental acknowledgment that Jesus is the Son of God. The demons also believe and believe so strongly that they tremble (James 2:19). Ask yourself, "will the demons be saved?" The chief rulers of the Jews believed (John 12:42,43). Yet, they would not confess Jesus lest they be put out of the synagogue. The phrase "faith only" is found only once in the New Testament. "You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only" (James 2:24). By what Saul saw and heard, he was convinced and believed, but was not saved. Saving faith must be active. Saul saw this in that he asked, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" (Acts 9:6).

Still it is argued that Ananias called him "brother" upon visiting him at the house in Damascus. The term "brother," was a common form of address used to identify a kinsman, that is, a fellow Jew (cf. 2:29,37; 3:17; Romans 9:3).

If Saul was saved on the road to Damascus, Saul did not know it, for he asked what he needed to do. The Lord did not know it, for He sent Saul to Damascus to wait for someone to tell him what to do. If Saul was saved on the road to Damascus, he was the most miserable saved man for he did not eat or drink for the next three days (Acts 9:9). Ananias did not know it. He went as instructed, to tell Paul what he was to do. Furthermore, if saved on the road Saul was saved without calling on the name of the Lord and before his sins were washed away (Acts 22:16).

When was Saul saved? He was saved when he was baptized. Again, Ananias told Saul to "Arise and be baptized, and wash away your

sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). You see if it was before baptism, then Ananias lied when he stated that Saul had sins that needed to be washed away! Robert H. Stein of Bethel Theological Seminary, in addressing the question: "Is Baptism Necessary for Salvation?," affirmed the following regarding 22:16. "Washing away one's sins is here clearly connected with baptism and the calling on Jesus' name" (Stein, Robert. 1990. Difficult Passages in the New Testament. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker. P. 330).

Saul was baptized immediately. That is why we see such urgency in the words of Ananias, "What are you waiting for? Arise!" Baptism is not to be delayed or postponed. "Be baptized" is in the middle voice form, literally therefore: "have yourself immersed...a decisive and immediate" action (Robertson 391).

At what point were you saved? Have you really been saved yet?

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Service Times

Sunday Bible Study.....9:30 am
 Sunday Worship Service.....10:30 am
 Sunday Worship Service.....5:00 pm
 Wednesday Bible Study.....7:30 pm



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