

Paul Was Saved On The Road To Damascus

Acts 9:1-9

Introduction: Why We Want To Know When Paul Was Saved

There are many different views out there on when the Apostle Paul got saved. We know that salvation is only through the Lord Jesus Christ and by believing in Him alone. Some people say that Paul was saved on the road to Damascus, some say he got saved when he was with Ananias in Damascus, some say at his baptism, and some say he got saved later on in ministry.

I am not going to go over all of those views because some of them are just silly. For example, we know people aren't saved from their sins when they get baptized in water. We also know that we don't have prove our salvation by going into ministry and doing good works. Good works do not save our soul from hell. Only the work of God saves us—Jesus saves us from our sins.

So, I want to focus in on two options here:

1. The Road to Damascus
2. In Damascus

Did the Apostle Paul get saved on the road to Damascus or did he get saved in Damascus? Let's answer that question today and let's see why some people are attempting to teach that he was saved in Damascus.

Let's first go over the 3 different accounts of Paul on the road to Damascus. And I want you to pay close attention to the fine details of each of these accounts. The 3 accounts we will look at in detail are Acts 9:1-22, Acts 22:1-21, and Acts 26:1-23. And I want you to really focus in on the salvation part of each of these accounts. Let's read this together.

First Account of Paul on the Road to Damascus: Acts 9:1-22

""Acts 9:1-22

And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, 2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. 3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: 4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. 6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. 7 And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. 8 And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and

brought him into Damascus. 9 And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink. 10 And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. 11 And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, 12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight. 13 Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: 14 And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. 15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: 16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake. 17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. 18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized. 19 And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. 20 And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. 21 But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests? 22 But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.""

In this first account, what do you see exactly? Paul came near Damascus. A light from heaven shined around Paul. He fell down on the ground. A voice asks Paul, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Paul says, "Who are thou, Lord?" The Lord says, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." Paul is trembling. He says, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" The Lord says, "Arise and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." Saul gets up. He opens his eyes but can't see. The men with him take him to Damascus. He went three days without sight. Ananias goes to Paul and puts his hands on him. Ananias says to Paul, "Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost." Immediately Paul receives his sight. Paul arises. Paul is baptized. Paul starts preaching Jesus Christ in the synagogues. That's the first account. We can't stop there to know exactly what happened because there are two other accounts of what happened.

Second Account of Paul on the Road to Damascus: Acts 22:1-21

""**Acts 22:1-21**

Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you. 2 (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,) 3 I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day. 4 And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. 5 As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren,

and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished. 6 And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. 7 And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 8 And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. 9 And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me. 10 And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do. 11 And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus. 12 And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there, 13 Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him. 14 And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. 15 For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. 16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord. 17 And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; 18 And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. 19 And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee: 20 And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him. 21 And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.""

In this account, we see Paul on the road to Damascus. He is near Damascus about noon. A light shines around Paul. He falls to the ground. He hears a voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" He answers, "Who art thou, Lord?" Jesus says, "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest." Paul says, "What shall I do, Lord?" Jesus says back to Paul, "Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do." He was then led into Damascus because he couldn't see for the glory of that light. Ananias comes to Paul and says, "Brother Saul, receive thy sight." He could see the same hour. Ananias then tells Paul, "The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Some people will say that the Scripture there proves Paul wasn't saved yet because Ananias tells him to be baptized, and to wash away his sins calling on the name of the Lord. Now we go to the third account. We can't stop on the first two. We must have all three accounts.

Third Account of Paul on the Road to Damascus: Acts 26:1-23

""Acts 26:1-23

Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself: 2 I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews:

3 Especially because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently. 4 My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; 5 Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. 6 And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: 7 Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. 8 Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead? 9 I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 10 Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. 11 And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities. 12 Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, 13 At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. 14 And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. 15 And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. 16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; 17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, 18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. 19 Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: 20 But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance. 21 For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me. 22 Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: 23 That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.""

Paul says that he went towards Damascus. At midday he sees a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun shining around him. He fell to the earth. He hears a voice speaking to him, "Saul, Saul why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." Paul says, "Who art thou, Lord?" Jesus responds, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." Then Paul says he was obedient to this heavenly vision. He preached to repent and turn to God and do works meet for repentance. Paul was an example. He repented

and then did the works meet for repentance. Paul present the Gospel that Christ should suffer and be the first to rise from the dead and shew light unto the people and to the Gentiles.

The Third Account Gives Us More Detail

Now, in the first two accounts we don't see everything that Jesus said to Paul. We don't see Jesus preaching the Gospel to Paul in the first two accounts. But, in the third account that we just read, we see Jesus preaching the Gospel to Paul.

""Acts 26:18-22

To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. 19 Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: 20 But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance. 21 For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me. 22 Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: 23 That Christ should suffer, *and* that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.""

Jesus preaches to Paul, "To open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sin, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."

Isn't that the Gospel right there? Open their eyes. Turn them from darkness to light. From the power of Satan unto God. They receive forgiveness of sin. They receive inheritance. How? Jesus tells Paul right there: "Which are sanctified BY FAITH that is in me." That is the Gospel preached to Paul right there by Jesus Christ.

And I know 100% for sure that the Apostle Paul believed the Gospel because the Paul says in verse 19 right there, and don't miss this, "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." The Bible talks about OBEYING THE GOSPEL.

Paul Obeyed the Gospel

""Romans 10:16

But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?""

""2 Thessalonians 1:8

In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:""

""1 Peter 4:17

For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?""

Paul obeyed the Gospel right then and there by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. And Paul proves to everyone that he already believed by doing what Jesus asked him to do. And Paul says in Acts 26, "I continue unto this day." He believed on the Lord Jesus Christ and started to obey Jesus from THAT DAY when he was saved. Paul was saved on the road to Damascus and then did exactly what Jesus told him to do.

Paul wasn't saved later with Ananias. We don't see any Gospel preaching by Ananias in any of the three accounts. We simply see Ananias doing what Jesus told him to do. He helps Paul receive his physical sight and gives Paul his mission. Paul was saved before he got to Ananias.

Calling Upon the Lord

So we go back to Acts 22 and we take a close look because this confuses people. And some pastors like to take these Scriptures and confuse people even more. The best deceivers will prey on people through these Scriptures that God put here purposely. And those deceivers will pay for what they do.

""Acts 22:12-16

And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there, 13 Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him. 14 And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. 15 For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. 16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.""

Now, please listen to me closely here. We know 100% for sure that a person gets saved the exact moment they put their faith IN Jesus Christ. There's a group of people out there that love to focus in on these Scriptures because they teach that someone must ASK Jesus to save them before they are actually saved. For example, they might say that Paul believed in Jesus on the road to Damascus but he wasn't yet saved because he had not asked Jesus to save him. And they will say that calling upon the name of the Lord is asking Jesus to save you.

I believe calling on the name of the Lord occurs when you're believing IN Jesus Christ for salvation. You're believing in Jesus to save you. You're calling upon Him for salvation when you're believing in Him for salvation. I do not equate calling upon the name of the Lord as the Sinner's Prayer. I do not equate calling upon the name of the Lord as asking Jesus to save you.

And for those out there who say, "Josh, have you called upon the name of the Lord? Have you asked Jesus to save you?" I believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. That's enough for Jesus. That's enough for Paul. And I have continued to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. When I believed, I

called upon Jesus Christ for salvation. And I prayed to Jesus, MOCKERS, and asked Jesus to save me too. Is that enough for you mockers out there? Here, let's do it right here since I believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Let's see if this enough for you. I am going to bow my head right now and pray to Jesus Christ.

"Jesus, I believe I'm a sinner. I believe the penalty for my sins is death and hell. If I had to pay for my own sins, I would die and go to hell. But I believe you, Jesus, paid for all my sins—every one of them that I'll ever commit no matter how big they are. I know you're the Son of God and God in the flesh. I know you died on the cross for me. I know your blood was shed for me and the sins of the whole world. You are the sacrifice for sins. When you died, I believe your body was buried and your soul went to hell. I believe that you arose from the dead—your soul came out of hell and your body came out of the tomb. You showed yourself alive. You were dead but now you're alive forever. And I know that you alone are THE SAVIOR. Nothing I can do can save me. It's only you Jesus. Not of works. Once I believed in you, in that moment, I know you saved me forever and gave me everlasting life. Nothing I could ever do would take that free gift away from me. You gave me everlasting life that cannot be lost. Once you saved me, you saved me forever. I know I'm going to heaven when this body dies. Thank you for saving me Jesus. And Jesus I am praying this right now even though I know you already saved me, but I'm praying this for the lack of faith of others who want to question my salvation. Jesus, please save me. Thank you Jesus. Amen."

And I believe IN Jesus with all my heart, with all my soul, with all my mind. I love Jesus Christ. I love His words. I love the Bible. I love my Father in heaven. I love the Holy Spirit with everything I've got right now. Now, is that enough proof that I'm saved? Is it not enough that I preach the Gospel? It is not enough that I'm giving my life work to Jesus Christ? Is that enough for you out there?

It's not for mockers of the word of God. Mockers who change the word of God to serve their own bellies. Teaching people that Paul wasn't saved by Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus. Teaching people that it takes a man praying with you so you can be saved. What a mocker of God's word you've turned out to be out there. STOP MOCKING GOD'S WORD AND GOD'S PEOPLE.

""Acts 22:16

And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.""

Let's be serious here. Do you really believe that Paul had not yet believed on the Lord Jesus Christ? Or do you believe it takes more than that for Paul to be saved. The people preaching these things are saying that more has to be done than simply believing. Keep Acts 2:38 in mind as you read that right there.

Do you have to get baptized in water to be saved? Acts 2:38. Acts 22:16. Calling on the name of the Lord does save but it's happening at the moment of belief. You are calling on Jesus by believing in Jesus to save you. Baptism is a picture of washing away thy sins. Because you've

called on the name of the Lord, Paul—because your sins are already washed away, Paul, get baptized. Obey what Jesus has told you to do. But I want you to notice the trickery here that people attempt to use. They are acting just like the Pentecostals when they say you must be baptized to be saved.

Ananias knows Paul has already called on the name of the Lord. Ananias called him brother Saul before he touched Paul. Jesus gave Paul the revelation of the Gospel and saved his soul. Then Paul went and did what Jesus commanded because he already believed in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The calling on (faith in Christ) is what actually saves and washes sins away. It's the FAITH IN CHRIST—not other action. Repent for salvation is equal to believing is equal to calling on the Lord.

Paul believes on the road to Damascus and calls Jesus Lord. Ananias calls Paul brother. Your sins, Paul, are washed away because you've called on the Lord. Now rise, be baptized, and live out this faith that you already have. Baptism is a picture of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ that actually washes sins away the moment of believing IN Him.

Hey, listen, if you add anything else to the Gospel but Jesus Christ, then it's not Jesus alone.

Ananias could have also meant to show us your past sins are washed away. Paul had been persecuting them. All the disciples there knew Paul. They were afraid of Paul because of what he had done. Clear your conscience, restore your sight, have fellowship with us. Wash away thy past sins. You're with us now. The baptism confirmed to the others that Paul was obeying Jesus Christ now.

Not After Man—Neither Received it of Man

""Galatians 1:11-12

But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. 12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.""

This is the Holy Spirit of God writing these words from Paul. There is no lie here. Don't ignore the word of God. Paul is clearly speaking about the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul was clearly not a believer in Jesus Christ before Jesus showed up to him on the road to Damascus. Paul was clearly a believer in Jesus Christ as he left that encounter with Jesus Christ BEFORE he met Ananias.

Paul says right there in the Holy Scriptures: "Not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by revelation of Jesus Christ."

"Not after man" → Paul's gospel wasn't second-hand. He didn't get saved through a man's message. NOT AFTER MAN—that includes Ananias.

"Neither received it of man" → Not from Ananias, not from the apostles in Jerusalem.

“Neither was I taught it” → No human instruction first. No repeat after me.

“But by the revelation of Jesus Christ” → He received the gospel *directly from Jesus Himself* — which happened when Christ appeared to him on the Damascus road (Acts 9, 22, 26). I am not sure how much clearer the word of God can be. But people will twist the Scriptures to preach a false doctrine.

Some people need Paul's salvation to be tied to a man otherwise their authority structure weakens. People will attempt to say Paul being blinded meant he wasn't saved. He was blind for 3 days. Why? He was blinded by the glory of that light the Bible says. It doesn't mean he didn't get saved when the light appeared.

Paul preached salvation by faith alone in Jesus Christ. Who did Paul get that from? Straight from Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus. There was no in between period where Paul believed but he wasn't yet saved until he called upon the name of the Lord asking to be saved. When he believed, he called to be saved from all his sins by Jesus Christ alone.

And that's the truth. You never see Paul repeating a prayer or saying, "Jesus, please save me."

He did say, "What shall I do LORD?" He believed in Jesus so he spoke. He asked Jesus what to do next. Jesus told him. Paul believed in Jesus and went. He went and did the works Jesus told him to do because he believed already. He was there when Ananias got there because he already believed. He was jsut persecuting and wanting to kill the believers at Damascus.

Do you not see he believed on the road to Damascus? It's very simple. It's very easy to see this. False doctrine such as you have to ask to be saved blinds you to the truth. And when someone shows you this, you ignore them and call them names. Instead, humble yourself to the word of God—the truth. Stop being so prideful and lifted up.

Be humble and hear God's clear proof that Paul was saved on the road to Damascus.

Let's pray.