



## Cases of Conversion: Saul

Acts 9 details the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. This same Saul held the coats of the Jews as they stoned Stephen (Acts 7:58). This was the same Saul who persecuted the church in Jerusalem with great severity (Acts 8:1-3). In fact, just before Saul's conversion he was on his way to the synagogue at Damascus to find more Christians to imprison (Acts 9:1-2).

Yet, on the way Saul sees a "light from heaven" and hears the voice of Jesus (Acts 9:3-6). The voice informs Saul to go to Damascus and wait for a disciple named Ananias (Acts 9:7-12). Saul obeys the voice and even refers to Jesus as "Lord" in Acts 9:6. Yet, was Saul saved? Obviously, the miraculous event instills belief in Him and even renders a confession from Saul's lips. Many would teach that such a confession indicates that Saul was saved that very moment. Yet, if Saul is already saved then why does Ananias need to come at all? Why is there no joy or relief? Why does he refuse food or drink for the three days before Ananias arrives (Acts 9:9)? These are not the joyous actions of a saved man, but the agonizing depression of a lost and fearful sinner!

Ananias comes to Damascus and teaches Saul he must believe in the Lord Jesus and proclaim the gospel (Acts 9:15-17). Verse 18 says, "Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized. So when he had received food, he was strengthened."

From the text, observe that Saul did not eat and was not comforted until after he was baptized. Why is there no joy until after his baptism? Well, take a look at another account of Saul's conversion in Acts 22. As Saul, now Paul, recounts his conversion to the Sanhedrin he remembers one of the distinct instructions from Ananias, his teacher, "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 had no joy until after his baptism because his sins were not washed away until he was baptized into Christ. Have you obeyed the gospel?

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