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THE SURE WORD by Jonnie Hutchison

WHEN WAS SAUL SAVED?

There are three accounts of the conversion of Saul (the apostle Paul) in the book of Acts. His initial conversion is found in Acts 9:1-9 and he recounts the details of his conversion in Acts chapters 22 and 26. Before his conversion to Christ, Saul was a persecutor of Christians. Saul said, "I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women." (Acts 22:4). The High Priest gave Saul authority to travel beyond Jerusalem to find Christians, bind them, and bring them back to Jerusalem for punishment (Acts 22:5). It was in pursuit of this effort that Paul travels on the road that leads from Jerusalem to Damascus. Here he comes face to face with none other than Jesus Christ. The details of this encounter include a bright light which shown around Saul and a voice which said, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" Saul asked who was speaking and he was given the answer, "I am Jesus of Nazareth whom you are persecuting." It is evident that Saul believed the words of Jesus for he asked, "what shall I do Lord?" Some would have us to believe that Saul was saved at that point. He obviously believed in Jesus, and some would say that was enough. Yet, rather than telling Saul there was nothing further he needed to do, Jesus answered, "Arise and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all things which are appointed for you to do." Yes, there was still something further that Saul needed to do.

Because he was blinded by the great light Saul was led into Damascus by those traveling with him. There, as he waited for additional instructions, he spent his time in prayer (Acts 9:11). Ananias was instructed to go to the place where Saul was waiting. His mission was to tell Saul what he was to do. Ananias told Saul, "...The God of our fathers has chosen you that you should know His will, and see the Just One, and hear the voice of His mouth. For you will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard." That is when Ananias asked Saul, "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:13-16).

When was Saul saved? When he met Jesus on the road? When he was praying as he waited for Ananias? Or, was Saul saved when he followed the instructions to "arise and be baptized and wash away your sins"? What does the Bible say?