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Acts 22:1-16

1. “Brethren and fathers, hear my defense which I now *offer* to you.’
2. And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew dialect, they became even more quiet; and he said,
3. ‘I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated under Gamaliel, strictly according to the law of our fathers, being zealous for God just as you all are today.
4. ‘I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and putting both men and women into prisons,
5. as also the high priest and all the Council of the elders can testify. From them I also received letters to the brethren, and started off for Damascus in order to bring even those who were there to Jerusalem as prisoners to be punished.
6. ‘But it happened that as I was on my way, approaching Damascus about noontime, a very bright light suddenly flashed from heaven all around me,
7. and I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?”
8. ‘And I answered, “Who are You, Lord?” And He said to me, “I am Jesus the Nazarene, whom you are persecuting.”
9. ‘And those who were with me saw the light, to be sure, but did not understand the voice of the One who was speaking to me.

10. ‘And I said, “What shall I do, Lord?” And the Lord said to me, “Get up and go on into Damascus, and there you will be told of all that has been appointed for you to do.”

11. ‘But since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me and came into Damascus.

12. ‘A certain Ananias, a man who was devout by the standard of the Law, *and* well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there,

13. came to me, and standing near said to me, “Brother Saul, receive your sight!” And at that very time I looked up at him.

14. ‘And he said, “The God of our fathers has appointed you to know His will and to see the Righteous One and to hear an utterance from His mouth.

15. “For you will be a witness for Him to all men of what you have seen and heard.

16. “Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.”””

Here we have the apostle Paul’s own testimony as to how he was saved. Note first of all that on the road to Damascus Jesus confronted Saul saying, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?”

Saul answers, “Who art Thou, Lord?” The term Lord here would be the equivalent of “sir”--a polite address of respect to someone you don’t know.

Then Jesus identifies Himself to Saul saying, “I am Jesus the Nazarene, whom you are persecuting.” At this point Saul

calls on Jesus as Lord. “Lord” this time is used in the sense of a submissive servant to his master. Saul asks, “What shall I do, Lord?” Jesus instructs Saul to go into Damascus and he will be told what to do.

According to Luke’s account of Paul’s conversion in Acts 9, verses 9 and 11, Saul waited in Damascus for three days while fasting and praying the whole time.

Then the Lord Jesus sent a devout Christian by the name of Ananias to Saul. After healing Saul of his blindness and informing him that Jesus has a great ministry planned for him, Ananias asks Saul, “And now why do you delay? Arise and be baptized, and wash away you sins, calling on His name.”

Note that Saul’s sins were not “washed away” until he was baptized by Ananias in the name of Jesus.

Many have been taught that Saul was saved on the road to Damascus when he confessed with his mouth Jesus as Lord. Others believe a sincere sinner’s prayer, such as Saul’s three day fast and prayer in Damascus, will save them.

My question is this--can a person be saved before his sins are washed away?

I urge you to be noble-minded like the Berians of old: “Receive the word with great eagerness; examine the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things are so!