

MYTH BUSTERS

DAY TWO: MYTHS ABOUT THE PLAN OF SALVATION ***THE CONVERSION OF SAUL OF TARSUS***

Acts 9, 22, 26

Introduction:

1. The most important question one can ask is, “What must I do to be saved?”
2. Sadly, the religious world is filled with different groups that give differing answers to that question.
3. As a result, the Bible truth about salvation is often misunderstood, ignored, or rejected.
4. Because of this, souls are lost.
5. Our job in this lesson will be to investigate what the Bible really says that one must do to be saved.
6. We will find out what the Bible teaches concerning this and put to rest any myths relating to the plan of salvation.

I. The Conversion of Saul

- A. The man who became the Apostle Paul was originally known as Saul.
 1. He was from the city of Tarsus in Cilicia (Acts 9:11).
 2. It was a “free city” of the Roman Empire, meaning that Paul was born a free Roman citizen (Acts 22:27-28).
 3. He was born a Jew (Acts 22:3) and brought up as a Pharisee (Acts 23:6).
 4. After being educated at home by his parents (Deut. 6:4-9), Paul was taught by the well-known and respected rabbi Gamaliel (Acts 5:34-40; 22:3; 26:4).
- B. Saul was strongly opposed to the Gospel of Jesus and His followers, the church.
 1. He was present at the stoning of Stephen and gave his consent to the actions (Acts 7:54-60; 8:1).
 2. Without violating his conscience – thinking he was doing right (Acts 23:1) – Saul began to persecute the church.
 3. This persecution caused the church to be “scattered abroad” (Acts 8:1, 4).
 4. He “made havoc” of the church – laying waste to it by entering into the homes of Christians and forcibly dragging them to prison.
 5. He sought (and received) authority to travel to Damascus in order to find and arrest more Christians (Acts 9:1-2; 22:5).
 6. As a result, he became a blasphemer, a persecutor, and a man full of contempt for others (1 Tim. 1:13).
- C. Yet, on the road to Damascus, Paul was confronted with the error of his ways when he saw a vision of the Lord (Acts 9:3-9; 22:6-11; 26:12-18).
 1. This vision revealed the majesty of God.
 2. This vision proved the resurrection of Jesus.
 3. This vision confirmed sinfulness of Saul.
 4. This vision demonstrated the mercy of Heaven.

- D. Following this vision, Paul went into the city where a disciple named Ananias told him what God required of him and what he must do to be forgiven (Acts 9:10-18; 22:12-16).
1. Paul learned about humility (Acts 9:9a, 12).
 2. Paul learned about penitence (Acts 9:9b).
 3. Paul learned about baptism (Acts 22:12-16; 9:18).
 4. Paul learned about forgiveness.
- II. Myths about the Conversion of Saul
- A. Sadly, this beautiful story has been twisted and misused to teach many myths about what really happened and what God commands concerning salvation.
- B. **Myth One:** *To be saved, one must only be sincere and religious.*
1. Saul was both sincere and religious (Acts 9:1-2; 22:9).
 2. He was a servant of God, but misinformed about what God wanted (cf. Matt. 7:21-23).
 3. In spite of his sincerity and his religion, Saul was not saved.
- C. **Myth Two:** *One who sees a vision from Heaven must be saved.*
1. In fact, some teach that one must see a vision from God to be saved – sometimes called a “religious experience”.
 - a. Many (if not all) of this claims cannot be proven.
 - b. Experiences are subjective.
 2. Saul saw a real, miraculous light and vision from Heaven (Acts 9:3; 26:13).
 3. Yet, he was still not saved from his sins.
- D. **Myth Three:** *One who hears the voice of Jesus must be saved.*
1. Some also claim this as a “religious experience”.
 2. Many say that they know that they are saved because the Lord spoke to them.
 3. Saul actually heard the voice of Jesus (Acts 9:4-5)!
 4. Yet, Saul was still lost in his sins – even after he heard the Lord.
 5. Today, God speaks through His Word (Heb. 1:1-2) which must be obeyed to find salvation.
- E. **Myth Four:** *One who receives instructions from Heaven must be saved.*
1. Saul received instructions from Heaven (Acts 9:6).
 2. But, the Lord did not speak in order to save Saul (Acts 26:16-18).
 3. God speaking does not prove salvation (Gen. 3:16-19).
 4. Today, the Gospel is to be preached by man (Matt. 28:18-20).
 5. Obedience to that Gospel is essential for salvation.
- F. **Myth Five:** *One who is sorry for his sins and repents is saved.*
1. Saul experienced godly sorrow over his sins (cf. 2 Cor. 7:10).
 2. Saul demonstrated a penitent heart (Acts 9:7-9).
 3. He did not eat or drink for three days!
 4. Yet, Saul was still not saved from his sins.
 5. If he was saved, he is a miserable saved man!
- G. **Myth Six:** *One who prays receives salvation.*
1. In his miserable condition, Saul prayed to God (Acts 9:10-11).
 2. Though God heard his prayers, he did not answer them by forgiving Saul of his sins.
 3. Instead, God sent Ananias to tell Saul what to do to be saved!
 - a. A similar thing happened with Cornelius (Acts 10:1-6; 11:13-14).
 - b. Prayer alone does not bring salvation to the sinner.

4. Notice that Paul was not commanded to, nor did he, pray the “sinner’s prayer.”
- H. **Myth Seven:** *One who experiences a miracle must be saved.*
 1. Saul had a miracle performed upon him (Acts 9:17).
 2. To many, this would be evidence that Saul was saved.
 3. However, receiving a miracle did not prove salvation (Acts 13:9-11).
 4. In fact, miracles proved that Jesus has the power to forgive sins (Matt. 9:1-7).
 5. Today, Jesus does not forgive sins by miracle, but by obedience to the Gospel.
- I. **Myth Eight:** *Baptism is not necessary for salvation.*
 1. All of the previous things that happened to Saul did not save him; yet, they are things that the religious world claims do save!
 2. However, the one thing that the Bible says did save Saul is the one thing that the religious world claims is not essential to salvation!
 3. Saul’s sins were washed away when he was baptized (Acts 22:12-16; 9:18).
 4. This proves that Saul was not saved on the road to Damascus.
 5. He was not saved in the three days that he fasted and prayed in the city.
 6. Saul was not saved until his sins were washed away by the blood of Christ in baptism (Rev. 1:5; Rom. 6:3-4).
 7. Baptism is essential to salvation.
 8. Furthermore, this passage proved that “calling on the name of the Lord” does not mean prayer – it means submission in obedience.
- J. Saul’s conversion teaches simple yet essential truths about God’s plan of salvation.

III. God’s Plan of Salvation

- A. Jesus gave universal commands that must be obeyed in order for a person to be saved – the Great Commission.
 1. Hear (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15)
 2. Believe (Mark 16:15-16)
 3. Repent (Luke 24:46-47)
 4. Confess Faith (Matt. 10:32-33)
 5. Be Baptized (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:16)
- B. The Apostle Paul also taught what men must do in order to be saved.
 1. Hear (Rom. 1:16-17; 10:17)
 2. Believe (Rom. 3:22; 5:1-2)
 3. Repent (Rom. 2:4; Acts 17:30-31)
 4. Confess Faith (Rom. 10:8-10)
 5. Be Baptized (Rom. 6:1-7; Gal. 3:26-27).
- C. Thus, when Saul became a Christian, he obeyed the Lord’s commands and, as a preacher, he taught others to do the same.
 1. Hear (Acts 9:3-6; 22:6-10)
 2. Believe (Acts 9:5, 17; 22:14)
 3. Repent (Acts 9:1-2, 9, 19-21)
 4. Confess Faith (Acts 26:16-21; 9:20, 22)
 5. Be Baptized (Acts 22:16; 9:17-19)
- D. God’s plan of salvation is clearly revealed and easily understood.
- E. Have you been obedient?