

The Conversion of Paul

By *Ron Boatwright*

In the book of Acts we have the account of the conversion of the apostle Paul. In Acts chapter 9, Paul is traveling on the road up to Damascus to persecute Christians. The Lord appears to Paul on the road and strikes him blind. In verse 6 Paul asks, "Lord what do you want me to do? Then the Lord said to him, Arise and go into the city, and you will be told **what you must do.**" The Lord did not tell Paul **what he must do**, but that someone in the city would tell him "**what you must do**".

Let's see now what Paul was **told what he must do**. In Acts chapter 22, a man named Ananias, came to Paul, taught him, and told him in Acts 22:16, "And now why are you waiting? Arise, and **be baptized and wash away your sins**, calling on the name of the Lord." Paul was not saved three days earlier while on the road to Damascus, as some people would like for us to believe. Paul up to this point was still lost, because he still had all his sins that needed to be washed away. Paul still had a sin problem. Obedience to the Lord's command to be baptized was necessary to wash away Paul's sins.

Paul was not told "to pray the sinners prayer and ask Jesus to come into his heart in order to be saved" as many falsely teach today. This is completely foreign to the scriptures. Forgiveness occurs in the mind of God and not on the basis of man's feeling in his heart. Only when we have done what **God** has said **that we MUST do**, will God forgive our sins. Man cannot devise his own plan as to how his sins are to be forgiven. Our sins have to be washed away in baptism, just as Paul's sins were. To be baptized for any reason other than for the remission of sins so one can be saved is to reject Christ. A person who has not been baptized for the purpose of having his sins washed away still has all of his sins and is still lost.