

The Defining Moment of Forgiveness

He was a committed Jew, zealous to do the will of God. He saw the risen Christ and became a believer. He was faithfully obedient to Jesus as Lord and did exactly as commanded (Acts 9:1-16). But, contrary to what many people believe, he was NOT yet forgiven of his sins! In short, despite an incredible life changing experience in the presence of the living Christ, he was not yet saved. How do we know? Paul said so.

Paul later recounted this experience with Christ and also with a disciple named Ananias (Acts 22:1-21). Ananias, chosen by the Lord to instruct Paul in his conversion, told him he would be Jesus' apostle to the Gentiles-but still, no forgiveness. How do we know? Because even after Paul's amazing journey, Ananias commanded him, "Arise, be baptized and wash away your sins calling on his name" (Acts 22:16).

Years earlier, 3,000 other Jews heard Peter similarly command, "Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). Presumably, these Jews (Acts 2:37-41) and the apostle Paul (Romans 6:1-7) understood baptism as the defining moment of their forgiveness and conversion into Christ. What has changed since then?