



# PathLights

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet  
and a light to my path"  
Psalm 119:104*

November 18, 2018

## When Was Saul Saved?

by Frank Himmel

Saul of Tarsus was a leader in the early opposition to Christianity. His conversion is a marvelous illustration of God's grace, one that has encouraged many through the centuries to realize that they, too, may be saved despite the enormity of their sins.



Unfortunately, Saul's salvation is often misrepresented. Contrary to popular religious thought, the Bible does not teach that Saul was saved the moment Jesus appeared to him or the moment he believed.

There are three accounts of Saul's conversion: Acts 9:1-19; 22:3-16; 26:9-18. Read them all to get the complete story.

Saul was on his way to Damascus to persecute Christians when the Lord appeared to him in the form of a blinding light. A heavenly voice asked, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" Saul asked who was speaking. The answer was, "I am Jesus the Nazarene, whom you are persecuting." Saul obviously believed the voice. He asked, "What shall I do, Lord?" The answer was to go into Damascus where he would be told what to do.

Note what is not said. The Lord did not say Saul was saved at that point. Neither did Luke, who wrote the original account. Neither did Saul when he twice recounted the incident.

For three days Saul fasted and prayed. That is conduct more characteristic of a penitent man in search of forgiveness than one who has just experienced it. Elsewhere throughout Acts the saved were rejoicing!

The Lord sent Ananias to teach Saul. His instruction was, "Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name" (Acts 22:16). Clearly, Saul was still lost. He was still in his sins. He had not yet called on the name of the Lord. Ananias's words are often explained as telling Saul to be baptized to symbolize his washing from sin; that is not, however, what he said!

Saul is later known as the Apostle Paul. In his letters he affirmed that we are baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:27), into His death (Romans 6:3), and that it is in Christ that we have forgiveness (Ephesians 1:7). While we are cleansed by Jesus' blood, that cleansing occurs in baptism (Ephesians 5:26; Titus 3:5). Paul also affirmed that calling on the name of the Lord is not belief itself but something which follows belief (Romans 10:13-14). 1 Peter 3:21 concurs that this call occurs in baptism.

Saul was saved at Damascus, when his faith prompted him to be baptized into Christ. Have you followed His example? ■

# Beware

by Frank Himmel

Jesus is the good shepherd who watches for our souls (John 10:11ff). He knows the dangers that we face as His sheep. He therefore sometimes says, “Beware.”

## Beware of Selfish Motives

“Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 6:1). While it is fine for others to see us doing good (Matthew 5:16), we must always be on guard lest others’ praise becomes our motive or our goal. We must always seek to glorify God, not ourselves.

## Beware of False Teachers

“Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves” (Matthew 6:15). Not all that is taught in the name of religion is true. Some things are just plain wrong! Some men are unscrupulous and aim to fleece the flock for their own benefit. Others are more honest and sincere but are ignorant or confused. It is essential that we confirm what is taught by examining it in light of God’s word.

## Beware of Bad Influences

“Watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees” (Matthew 16:6). Leaven works from within, slowly but surely affecting the entire lump of

dough. Jesus cautioned that others’ attitudes, beliefs, and lifestyles can have a similar effect of us. We are supposed to influence others for the better, but we must be careful lest the process gets reversed. And notice that it is the influence of religious people that Jesus especially cautions his disciples about.

## Beware of Greed

“Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions” (Luke 12:15). It is so easy for us to confuse “green pastures” with “greenbacks”; to think that more money and more stuff will make our lives better. Life is about relationships, not things. It is about serving God and others. Who ever admits to being greedy? Jesus said the danger is real and warns us to avoid *every form* of it. That calls for some soul-searching, does it not?

Let’s pay attention to our Shepherd’s cautions. ■



## Service Leaders for the Week

	Sunday	Wednesday
GREETER	Bruce Williams	Adam Wilson
SONG LEADER	Gary Hagler	Frank Himmel
OPENING PRAYER	Mark Clifton	
LORD’S SUPPER		
BREAD	Mike Zachry	
CUP	David Gray	
CONTRIBUTION PRAYER	Daven Daniel	
SERMON/INVITATION	Frank Himmel	Singing
CLOSING PRAYER	Josh Baucom	TBD