

Was Saul Saved When He Fell Off His Horse?

by John Isaac Edwards

On an outbound flight to preach Christ in Texas, I had a conversation with the passenger seated next to me about salvation. He had been made to believe that one is saved by the grace of God alone, without doing anything. Reasoning with him about that, I asked if he could give an example of anyone in the New Testament who was saved from his sins by grace alone, without doing anything. He thought for a moment and said: “Saul; he was saved when he fell off his horse.” I asked if he was sure it was a horse. I didn’t recall reading about a horse. Are you sure it wasn’t a camel (Gen. 24:64), a donkey (Gen. 22:3), or a mule (2 Sam. 18:9)? I had him read the account to see if it was a horse. A reading of Acts 9:1-6; 22:6-7; 26:12-14 will find no mention of a horse. As I did not find a horse, where Saul fell off his horse or where he was saved when he fell off his horse, there are some other things I did not find which are widely believed to be true. No mention of:

1) Salvation By Grace Alone. Was Saul saved by the grace of God? Most assuredly! He said he was. “But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in

vain...” (1 Cor. 15:10). I just wonder how God’s grace could have been bestowed in vain, if saved by grace alone without doing anything? When Saul asked, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” (Acts 9:6), why didn’t the Lord tell him there was nothing to do? Why did the Lord say, “Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do” (Acts 9:6). In the city he was told, “... arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16). “And immediately...he...arose, and was baptized” (Acts 9:18). All of that is strange language, if salvation is by grace alone without doing anything!

2) Salvation By Faith Only. Many are taught that we are saved by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort. Yet, there is not a jot or tittle of Scripture to support it! Are we saved by faith? No doubt! (Jn. 8:24; Rom. 5:1; Heb. 11:6). But, nowhere does the Bible teach that one is saved from his sins by faith only. In fact, the sole time the words “faith only” appear in the Bible is when the book of God says it’s not so! “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only” (Jas. 2:24). Jesus said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be

saved...” (Mk. 16:16). More than faith only is necessary to be saved!

3) Salvation By Prayer. It is commonly taught that one must just pray “the sinner’s prayer” to be saved. Why wasn’t Saul told such? Did it occur to you that Saul was praying before Ananias was sent to him? The Lord instructed Ananias to enquire for “...Saul of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth” (Acts 9:11). Why send Ananias, if saved by prayer? If saved by prayer, then he was saved before he was told what to do! Prayer is a privilege of the righteous (1 Pet. 3:12).

4) Salvation By Seeing A Vision. It’s been said, “I know I’m saved. I had a vision in which I felt that I was light as a feather and I felt that I was floating through the air, and I just felt like I was saved.” Were you really light as a feather? Well, no. Were you really floating through the air? No, I guess I really wasn’t. How then do you know you were really saved? Saul saw a vision (Acts 9:12), but wasn’t saved by seeing a vision. If so, no need to send Ananias, and again he would have been saved before told what to do! Thus, saved without faith (Rom. 10:17), and saved without pleasing God (Heb. 11:6)! Who can believe it?

5) **Salvation By Having A Good Conscience.** When he asked the Lord what to do, was he told, “You just need to have a good conscience, Saul, and follow your conscience”? Nope! He already had a good conscience. He said, “...I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day” (Acts 23:1). Look what he was doing in all good conscience: giving consent to Stephen’s death (Acts 7:58-8:1), making havock of the church (Acts 8:3), breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord and on his way to Damascus with arrest warrants in hand to bring any of “this way” bound unto Jerusalem (Acts 9:1-2). Saul, why did you do all of that? “I verily thought with myself...” (Acts 26:9). We must learn: “...the way of man is not in himself...” (Jer. 10:23) and “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Prov. 14:12).

6) **Salvation By Being Religious.** Some think they need to get religion; that it matters not which religion — one is just as good as another. Was Saul told, “You need to be religious”? No, he was already religious! He was

“...in the Jews’ religion...” (Gal. 1:13-14). One may be religious, but religiously wrong. He came to realize he had to make a change in his religion. How about you?

7) **Salvation By Following Tradition.** Many just do what’s been handed down to them by tradition. You might ask an individual why he is what he is religiously and he tell you: “That’s what my parents were.” Did the Lord tell Saul, “You just need to do what was passed down to you from your fathers”? No, he was already doing that! He declared, “...being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers” (Gal. 1:14). By following the traditions of men, we can make “the commandment of God of none effect” and worship God “in vain” (Mt. 15:6, 9)!

8) **Salvation Withheld Because You’ve Been Too Bad.** One might think, “There’s no way the Lord could save me. I’ve been too bad!” Have you been worse than Saul? He said, “...Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief” (1 Tim. 1:15). How about the Corinthians — “...fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate,

abusers of themselves with mankind, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners...” (1 Cor. 6:9-10). Have you been worse than them? They were “washed”, “sanctified” and “justified” (1 Cor. 6:11). So can we!

If Saul was saved on the road to Damascus, he was the most miserable saved man I’ve ever seen. “...he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink” (Acts 9:9)! Compare that with the Ethiopian who “... went on his way rejoicing” (Acts 8:39) and the jailor who, “...set meat before them, and rejoicing...” when “...he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized...” (Acts 16:33-34).

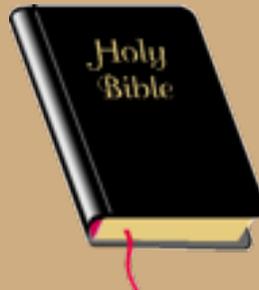
The idea that Saul was saved when he fell off his horse is just a an example of things not mentioned in the Bible which folks think are there. And there are things taught in the Bible of which they just don’t know. We don’t point out these things to belittle anyone, or to be mean or ugly. “But speaking the truth in love...” (Eph. 4:15). We ought to receive the love of the truth that we might be saved (2 Th. 2:10).

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