

# "Praying Through"

(by Bob Pulliam)

Is there a passage in the New Testament where we find someone becoming a Christian by "praying through"? Was it the three thousand on Pentecost in Acts 2? No, they were told to repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins (v38). Was it the Ethiopian Eunuch? No, he stopped the chariot so he could be baptized, not to "pray through" (Acts 8:3 6ff). Was it Saul of Tarsus (also known as Paul)? No, he was not praying when he saw the Savior on the road; and he still had his sins until after he entered Damascus and was baptized three days later (Acts 22:16).

So where do some denominations get their doctrine about "praying through"? I'm saddened to say it, but it comes out of their church manuals and creeds. Why?... Because they have accepted a theology that forces them to seek salvation apart from God's revealed way. In this case, the doctrine of praying through was the result of another doctrine called "total depravity", which necessitated the doctrine of the Holy Spirit giving faith ("irresistible grace"), which prompted the doctrine of "praying through" so that the Holy Spirit would give faith. Does that seem confusing? It's confusing because it all originated in the minds of men who were not satisfied with the terms of salvation as given by God. I know that may sound a little harsh, but I haven't found the scripture yet to support it. I look at the back of tracts, and read what they tell people to do to be saved. They give scriptures up to this point, and then there is nothing. They don't even give me a passage for this doctrine.

When I question them on this, some will point to Simon the sorcerer in Acts 8. He was commanded to repent and pray (v22). But hadn't he already become a Christian? Yes he had (v13). Repentance and prayer is what the erring child of God is to do in returning to the Father. But what about Cornelius. An angel appeared to him after he prayed and he was saved (Acts 10:3ff). No, he was not. The angel told Cornelius to send for Peter who would speak unto him words by which he would be saved (Acts 11:14). He couldn't have been saved before Peter got there. Otherwise, Peter would not have needed to come!

## ***What This Doctrine Involves...***

Praying through refers to the act of one praying continually for the Holy Spirit to give saving faith. When the Holy Spirit supposedly does this, the person is said to have "prayed through". This "praying through" was, in time past, done at a padded knee bench called "the mourner's bench". This furniture for the knees and elbows of the mourner were located at the front of the building, and respondents to the "altar call" were referred to these benches until they made their "connection" with God.

More common is the simple prayer for salvation which is not called "praying through", although the concept still amounts to the same thing. The individual prays for the Lord Jesus to come into his heart and save him. In the Bible, you just don't find God operating that way, and this is troubling to me. This popular doctrine is leading people to believe they are saved when they have not followed the clear prescription of the New Testament. There we find people asking what to do to be saved and receiving answers. Baptism was always present on those occasions and preceded salvation (Acts 2:38; 22:16).

## ***Conclusion...***

If you think you were saved by simply praying for salvation, I beg you to read the book of Acts. Seek the example where someone became a Christian by praying for salvation. Seek

that passage anywhere within the New Testament. If it's there, I'd like to know about it. If it's not, please consider the course before you very carefully, and do as God has commanded in scripture.