

## When Was Paul Saved?...

(by Bob Pulliam)

Many today are of the conviction that you have to receive some special experience from God before you're saved. They tell us, that at the time the experience occurs you are saved by God. The bottom line is, if you don't have a religious experience, you're not saved. Added to this doctrine is the concept of voting one into a particular church. Not every denomination does this, but some do. Before the voting takes place, the candidate must tell of his/her experience (testify or witness). The congregation listens and then votes on the individual's acceptance into that church. The experience must meet two criteria for the person to be voted into a church:

- The experience must be out of the ordinary.
- The person must feel salvation as a result of the experience.

Now allow me to give you a case on which a church might vote. Consider the story in light of the two criteria above, and determine whether or not you think your local denomination would vote this person into it's ranks....

A man and his associates were on a business trip to a particular city. They were on the main highway into town when he saw a light. No one else in the car saw the light. However, they did hear a voice that spoke. This man seemed to carry on a conversation with this unseen voice, and then told the men to take him to a particular place in the city. This man knew that he had spoken to the Lord, but yet he didn't feel complete. He was so distressed that he didn't eat anything for three days. This experience, according to this man, was not a saving experience. He claims that salvation came when he was baptized three days later.

By the criteria already noted, this story wouldn't even get the apostle Paul voted into a church today. I'm sure you already realize that it is the apostle Paul's story that I related (with a few modern details... read Acts 22:6 - 16; Acts 9:1 - 19). Strip away the identity (keeping the order of when salvation came) and not one denomination today, that practices voting on members, would accept the apostle Paul into their membership.

The apostle Paul would be unwelcome in a church that votes on folks for acceptance into their church. Does that tell you anything?.....