

THE ERROR OF THE SINNER'S PRAYER

I. GOD DOES NOT HEAR SINNERS

A. **John 9:31**

The blind man Jesus healed defended the Savior's integrity by reminding the accusers that God does not hear sinners.

B. **1st Peter 3:12**

Urging his readers toward holiness, Peter quoted the 34th Psalm which teaches that God does not hear the prayers of evildoers.

II. PRAYERS DID NOT SAVE SINNERS LIKE SAUL OR CORNELIUS

A. **Acts 9:1-18; 22:16**

When Saul encountered the Lord on the road to Damascus, he asked what He needed to do and was told to await instruction in the city (6). He spent three days waiting in Damascus (9). While there, he was praying (11), but he still had to be baptized (18). Indeed, his sins were not washed away until his baptism (22:16)!

B. **Acts 10:1-6, 22-23, 30-33; 11:11-14; 10:43, 48**

Cornelius was a gentile who served Jehovah, God of Israel, before the gospel was proclaimed to gentiles, so his prayers were heard! Nevertheless, this man still needed to hear words by which he would be saved. Those words included the instruction to believe Christ and the command to be baptized.

III. PRAYERS OF FORGIVENESS ARE FOR WAYWARD CHRISTIANS, NOT ALIEN SINNERS

A. **Acts 8:22, 13**

Simon of Samaria was told by Peter to pray for forgiveness, but only after he had believed and been baptized.

B. **James 5:16-20**

Praying about our trespasses is taught in a “*one another*” context that can only be understood to mean fellow Christians. In this context, the goal is to save those who had the truth, but wandered from it.

IV. CONVERSION ACCOUNTS EXEMPLIFY A DIFFERENT PROCESS

A. Acts 18:8

The example of the Corinthians’ salvation shows that hearing, belief, and baptism are necessary.

B. Acts 16:30-34

The example of the Philippian jailer’s salvation shows that the word must be spoken (32), belief is needed (31), repentance is fitting (33_a), and baptism must occur (33_b).

C. Acts 8:35-39

The example of the Ethiopian treasurer’s salvation shows Jesus must be preached from Scripture (35), belief must happen (37_a), confession should occur (37_b), and baptism must follow (36, 38).