

What Must I Do to Be Saved?

- A. Never has there been a more important question framed by the heart and uttered by the tongue and trembling lips of mortal man than the question that I'm putting before you.
1. It is one that concerns the soul of every responsible human being in the world today.
 2. Can you even begin to imagine a question that is more momentous than the question, "**What must I do to be saved?**"
- B. Upon the correct and scriptural answer to this question is suspended the destiny of the entire world of responsible human beings.
1. And where the destiny of the soul is involved, we ought to be very careful in the course that we pursue.
 - a. A good place to begin is to heed the warnings of the apostle John:
(1 John 4:1 LITV) *Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are from God; for many false prophets have gone forth into the world.*
 - b. Rather than believe what a preacher says (without question) one should endeavor to be like the **Jews at Berea**:
(Acts 17:11 ISV) *These people were more receptive than those in Thessalonica. They were very willing to receive the message, and every day they carefully examined the Scriptures to see if those things were so.*
 - c. The truth is being taught and the preachers of it can be found. Unfortunately, these preachers are sometimes **mocked** for teaching what Jesus emphatically proclaimed, that is recorded in the gospel of Matthew:

Matthew 7:21 *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*
 - 1) The mockers insist that **works**, or **doing something** – **obedience**, is contrary to **grace**, and that those who teach the need to **do** something to **meet the conditions** God has

set forth, are rejecting Christ, and trying to save themselves by their own works.

- 2) They are **usually** a contender for the idea that a person is saved *at the point of faith*.
 - 3) These preachers ignore Jesus' teaching as they preach that all one must do to be saved is to PRAY.
 - 4) But an intelligent openminded person can't help but notice that **praying** is DOING something, and **if** it is commanded it is man **obeying God** to be saved—something "*faith only*" advocates detest.
 - 5) But the problem for them is that not only is there no command to pray, but there is also not one single passage in all the Bible that **even hints** that an alien sinner must pray for salvation.
2. Because of the importance of being right we ought to be very careful in the course that we pursue in our endeavor to learn what God wants us to do to become part of His family.
 3. And so those who hear and heed the warning (about false doctrine) are urged to seek out the true message honestly and earnestly, from God, that answers our question "**What must I do to be saved?**"
 4. We should strive sincerely to know the truth, and when we have found it we should be equally sincere in our efforts to accept it, live by it and teach it to others.
- C. There is just one reliable source from which to obtain the necessary information.
1. The opinions and speculations of uninspired men will not do.
 2. We must let the question be answered by the words of writers as they wrote by inspiration, which is recorded in the pages of the New Testament.
 3. There are many things involved in the salvation of man (at least 27):

- a. The love of God,
 - b. The death and blood of Jesus, and
 - c. The grace of the Heavenly Father.
 - 1) But these are the things that pertain to the divine side of salvation and are not concerned in the actual study of our question...what must I DO to be saved?
 - 2) Certainly, no one can be saved without them, but the question of our study pertains to the human side — what MAN must do.
- D. Following the Great Commission...disciples went about preaching the Gospel.
1. The preaching resulted in men asking what they must DO.
 2. We have three recorded incidents in the Book of Acts where people who HEARD the preaching asked the question that is the subject of our lesson.
 3. I now invite your careful attention that we may find the answer to the question in the words of men who wrote exactly what GOD inspired them to write.

Body

I. The Question of The Jailer

- A. Reference here is made to the jailer of the city of Philippi.
1. Paul and Silas were preaching in this city, as you will find recorded in Acts 16, and they were arrested upon the false charge of disturbing the peace of the city.
 - a. When they were placed in prison, the jailer received a charge to keep them safely; and having received such a charge, he put them in the inner cell and made their feet fast in the stocks.

- b. But at midnight, they prayed and sang praises to God.
 - c. A great earthquake followed, in which the *foundation of the prison* was shaken, the jail doors opened, and all the prisoner's chains were loosed.
2. The jailer awoke from his sleep, saw the prison doors open, supposed his prisoners had escaped, and decided that rather than face the Roman court on the charge of allowing the prisoners to escape, he would take his own life.
- a. But as he was about to do this, Paul got his attention and prevented the act.
 - b. The jailer came in trembling and fell before Paul and Silas.
 - 1) Some might think this was a good position in which to be saved, but he did not stay down.
 - 2) Instead, as the record informs us, he brought them out, of the jail and said, "**Sirs, what must I do to be saved?**" (**Acts 16:30**).
- B. The words of the Philippian jailer are, therefore, the words of my subject.
1. Fortunate for the Jailer, men inspired of God were present to answer the question.
 - a. And so, we are not left to guess about the matter, for they gave THE answer to the question.

*"And they said, **Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.**" (Acts 16:31).*
 - b. From this answer we learn that man cannot be saved without faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - 1) If he would be saved, he must *believe* on the Lord.
 - 2) Such information we are many times given in the pages of the New Testament.

- a) Jesus said *unless men believe* that He is the Christ, they will die in their sins and cannot go where He has gone (**Jn. 8:21, 24**).
 - b) And in **Hebrews 11:6**, we are informed that men cannot come to God, or please Him, without faith.
 - c) That principle is, therefore, found in the answer given to the jailer at Philippi.
2. But the trouble with many people is that they assume the jailer was told: "believe only, and thou shalt be saved."
- a. That, however, is the very thing he was NOT told.
 - b. The inspired men said to "*believe*," but they did not say to "*believe only*."
 - 1) The Bible tells us that "*faith only*" will not save (**Jas. 2:24**).
 - 2) But modern preachers stop right here in the divine record and tell their hearers that the **only thing** the jailer had to do was to **believe**.
 - i. But remember, the Jailer was told "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house*."
 - ii. One might argue that the Jailer **believed** at this point, but who would contend that he **and** "*all his house*" was saved when HE believed—would not they (the family) also need believe?
 - iii. Neither he nor any in his house had heard the preaching about Jesus at this point, yet it is assumed and asserted that he was saved based on the apostle's declaration that BELIEVING will result in being saved.
 - 3) Rather than assume that the Jailer was told to

"believe only" why not read the rest of the record?

a) **Verse 32** says, "*And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.*" (Acts 16)

b) If they had already told him ALL there was for him to do, why did they further preach to him the word of the Lord?

c) When they preached to him the word of the Lord, they told him something else to do:

"And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway." (Acts 16:33).

4) Unless the apostle commanded baptism also, in answer to the question, how did the jailer know anything about it?

a) And unless it was very important (urgent), why attend to it at the same hour of the night?

b) Why not postpone it till later?

II. The Question of The Pentecostians

A. In Acts 2, the question of our subject is again asked.

1. This time it is asked by the Jews in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.

2. Peter had just convinced them that the man called Jesus whom they had crucified had been made both Lord and Christ; and the record says, "*Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?*" (v. 37).

a. They knew they stood condemned before the God of heaven for crucifying the Son of God.

- b. They were lost, and they knew they were lost.
- c. They did not ask what to do because they were already saved (we call attention to the denominational teaching that DOING (works) only kicks-in after one is a Christian), they wanted to be saved from divine condemnation, and simply asked, "**Men and brethren, what shall we do?**"
 - 1) Clearly, the implication is they wanted to know what to DO to be saved.
 - 2) And they asked the right people.
- d. Peter was inspired by the Holy Spirit and was qualified to give them a correct answer to their question.

- 1) But what was his reply? Believe only? NO.

*"Then Peter said unto them, **Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.**" (v. 38).*

- 2) He did not tell them to believe, for they had already done that.
 - a) Yet he knew they were not saved, and told them something that they must do to be saved.
 - b) He said, "**Repent, and be baptized.**"
 - b) That they could not be saved without *repentance* goes without question, but he did not say for them to "repent only."
 - i He told them to "**repent, and**" DO something else — "**repent and be baptized.**"

B. Just as surely as Peter was guided by the Holy Spirit, the people on the day of Pentecost had to **repent and be baptized** to be saved.

- 1. If any man has a right to strike "**be baptized**" out of this answer,

why would not some other man have a right to strike "*repent*" out of it?

2. An *inspired* man put both in the answer, and no *uninspired* man can take either of them out.
3. Then, too, Peter said to be baptized "*for the remission of sins,*" which makes *remission* the object of baptism.

III. The Question of Saul

- A. This important question is recorded in the book of Acts in connection with the conversion of one other man — Saul of Tarsus. (Paul)
 1. You will find the incident mentioned in Acts Ch. 9, 22, 26.
 2. Saul was on his way to Damascus to persecute Christians when the Lord in the glory of a great light appeared to him and convinced him that he was Jesus of Nazareth.
 - a. Saul inquired, "*Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?*" (Acts 9:6).
 - b. The specific information was not given at that time, but the Lord said, "*Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.*"
 - 1) Whatever would be told him in Damascus will be something that he "*must do.*"
 - 2) The word "MUST" shows the importance of the information that would be given him.
 - 3) It was not to be something that he might leave undone without danger, but it was to be something that he MUST do.
- B. Ananias was sent to him to tell him what he needed to know and wanted to know and when he arrived, he found Saul PRAYING.

1. But he didn't tell him to "pray on until you pray through," (something denominational preachers often do) he STOPPED the prayer, as we see from his answer:
"And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16).
2. He was not told to **believe** or to **repent**, as he had already done these.
 - a. But he was told to *"be baptized and wash away thy sins."*
 - b. This was what remained for him to do, and as it was the ONLY thing Ananias told him to do.
 - 1) Furthermore, it was the thing he MUST DO – the thing to which Jesus referred when he conversed with Saul on the road to Damascus.
 - 2) But now if you listen to the teaching of popular preachers of our day (men not inspired) you will not accept this.
 - 3) However, if you listen to what **inspired** men say, as recorded in the New Testament, you should have no problem accepting it without question.

Conclusion

- A. We must take the combined testimony of these cases to get all the truth on this question.
 1. When the apostles answered the question for unbelievers, they told them to **believe**.
 2. When they answered believers, they told them to **repent and be baptized**.
 3. When they answered penitent believers, they told them to **be baptized**.
 4. And a confession of faith before baptism was always in order according to the instruction given to the Ethiopian Eunuch as recorded in Acts 8:36-37.

- B. The inspired answer to our question, therefore, is that men must believe, repent, confess Christ, and be baptized to be saved – all of which are in logical order.
1. But we must never get the idea that this is the **end of it**; rather, it is the **beginning** – the point at which the **new life** begins.
 - a. And isn't it nice that God set up this plan of salvation in such a way that one can know for sure the exact point that he is saved, rather than have doubts, and wonder about it?
 - b. This was made clear by the apostle Paul.
(Please pay close attention):

Romans 6:3-6; 17, 18 *Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: 6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. 16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? 17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. 18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.*

- c. Paul's teaching (above) harmonizes with Jesus' teaching about being *born of water* in the context of the need to be *born again* and how it is done (John 3:5):
(Please pay close attention)

John 3:3-5 *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. 4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be*

born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

- 1) The text is about BEING BORN AGAIN.
- 2) Jesus' answer to Nicodemus' question dispels the notion that "*born of water*" is only about being born the first time, as "*faith only*" advocates sometimes contend.

If you have not done so.....

2. Will you accept God's conditions and respond to His amazing grace?
 - a. **Believe** with all your heart that Jesus is God's Son.
 - b. **Repent** of your sins.
 - c. **Confess** your faith...; and
 - d. Be **baptized** in water and into Christ where you will have salvation full and free?
3. Many hear the truth but are not "*glad*" to receive it and follow the example of the 3000 Jews on the day of Pentecost that were baptized.
 - a. On that occasion, Peter preached facts from the O.T. about Christ who had risen from the dead and ascended into heaven:

*Act 2:36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. 37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, **Men and brethren, what shall we do?** 38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. 39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. 40 And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save*

yourselves from this untoward generation. 41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. 42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. 47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

- b. The same question those religious people asked is relevant today and may be on your heart.
- c. Considering that Peter said *“For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off”* you can rest assured that you will be added to the number of the saved if you do what the 3000 Jews on Pentecost did in obedience to the command that was in response to their question.
- d. You may think that you are a believer and have *eternal life*, but let's take a close look at a passage (from two versions, John 3:36) that indicates that a true believer is one that OBEYS:

(ASV) He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.

(ESV) Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.
- e. Have you obeyed the Lord? Remember Acts 6:3,4; 17, 18 (Paraphrase)
It is about *being buried with Jesus in baptism then to rise from the watery grave to walk in newness of life* and after *having obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine that was delivered to you, at that point you were **made free from sin** to become the servants of righteousness.*