

Lesson 5

Salvation What Must I Do To Be Saved? Acts 16:25-34

Introduction:

Mankind is mired in the predicament of sin as Paul stressed when he wrote, ***“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”*** (Rom 3:23 NASB). This has been the human condition since the time Adam and Eve sinned against God in the Paradise of Eden.

The world has an unrealistically rosy and optimistic view of the human situation because the world’s unbelief has blinded it to its own condition. Paul addressed this when he wrote, ***“Their foolish minds become darkened....”*** (Rom. 1:21).

The world views the human predicament in terms of social problems or in terms of national self-interest. But the world believes that individuals themselves are in fine condition. Therefore, the world continues to worship at the shrine of progress. The 19th century “positive thinker” Auguste Comte expressed the world view when he said, ***“Every day in every way we are becoming better and better.”***

Of course, there has been progress in the realm of technology, the mastery of the less than human. But man has not learned to master himself. Can anyone seriously believe that this world is becoming better and better every day morally and spiritually? We are surrounded by crime, war, loneliness, desperation, and tragedy.

It isn’t the cure of our social ills that the world needs, it is the cure for our sinfulness that we so desperately need. This is man’s greatest need as the first lesson in this series discussed. (See Salvation, Man’s Greatest Need)

However, the answer to man’s problem of sin has been so obscured by the various religious leaders through the years, people are confused, and many have even turned away in disgust. Let me give you one such example of how the truth has been obscured: In a radio sermon by a well-known preacher on the subject of **The Process of Salvation**, the last paragraph was shocking: ***“If you are not saved, God pity you for there is nothing you can do. God must do it all.”***

This is a terrible misuse of Scripture. The Book of Acts records many cases of conversions in the first century and shows conclusively that those people were all **active** in the process of being saved. By way of example, Saul of Tarsus was informed to go into the city and there it will be told you **what you must do** (Acts 9:6).

Let us begin our study by analyzing each word in the title of this lesson: **What Must I Do To Be Saved?**

“What” proves that there must be action on our part as there is something necessary for sinners to do to be saved!

“Must” shows the essentiality of it. It does not say what man can, shall, ought or might do. It is an imperative.

“I” proves it is personal and not inherited or done by proxy by someone else on our behalf.

“Do” states clearly that God did not in the past take care of salvation by Himself without any participation on our part.

“To Be Saved” teaches clearly that the actual cleansing emanates from God (I John 4:14; I Tim. 2:4), and that some “feel-good-deep-down-in-my-heart” feeling is not the source of salvation. When we do what God commands the salvation comes from Him and not from some fuzzy feeling inside of man!

I. How Did It Happen For The Prison Guard in Philippi?

After Paul and Silas were put into prison they were praying and singing hymns of praise to God about midnight. Suddenly there was a violent earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken and the doors were opened and everyone’s chains were unfastened.

The guard had been charged with ensuring that Paul and Silas didn’t escape, therefore he knew that his Roman overseers would execute him if his prisoners escaped. He was about to commit suicide when Paul spoke up: ***“Do yourself no harm, for we are all here!”*** (Acts 16:28 NASB)

Whereupon the guard cried out, ***“What must I do to be saved?”*** (Act 16:30). The apostle’s reply was ***“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household.”*** (Acts 16:31).

There was within the answer that which would bless the home as well as the jailer. His family would not be put to death if all the prisoners escaped, only the jailer, so the jailer being saved could in no way refer to being saved physically. True believers had often been subjected to the sword. The answer Paul gave could have reference only to **spiritual salvation**.

When Paul told the jailer to believe in order to be saved, was it the case that the sole and only thing to be done was just to believe? One of the most popular positions being advocated today is that the jailer was saved by **faith alone**.

One should realize that there is **no passage of Scripture** wherein every single item and act essential to salvation is mentioned.

For example, on Pentecost, Peter said, ***“And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the name of the Lord shall be saved”*** (Acts 2:21). Is this the entire package, part and parcel? There is not a word said about faith, or repentance, or baptism; **shall they be excluded?**

When Paul told the jailer to believe, he told him exactly what he needed to do, and of course he began at the right place.

This was entirely different from what Ananias had told Saul at an earlier time ("**Arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.**" Acts 22:16 NASB).

It was also different from what Peter told the people on Pentecost ("**Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**" Acts 2:38 NASB).

There is **no discrepancy** in these three accounts, but obviously each account shows people at different phases in their understanding and acceptance of the truth.

After Paul told the jailer to believe, he then proceeded to **teach the Word of the Lord** to him and his household in order that they might believe (Acts 16:32).

One cannot believe until one has been instructed in the truth, and this explains why Paul took the time at a very late hour of the night to teach them.

Rom 10:17 NASB

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

Did Paul spend time doing that which was unnecessary? We know that Paul and Silas were in a terrible physical condition, as is evidenced by the need to have their stripes bathed (Acts 16:33).

However, even before the washing of their stripes, there was the more important matter of teaching the word of God. The jailer evinces deep sorrow and pity as he attends to the wounds which had been inflicted on Paul and Silas and later feeding them.

Although the text **does not mention** that Paul told them to repent we are able to determine that the jailer did repent by the things the jailer did for Paul and Silas. Furthermore, Jesus taught that people must repent or perish (Lk. 13:3) and Paul had stressed this command in other situations (Acts 17:30-31).

It is also important to realize that the jailer and his house were baptized "**the same hour of the night**" (Acts 16:33 KJV). This act needed to be attended to "**straightway**" (Acts 13:33 KJV) or "**immediately**" (NASB). If **baptism was not important** why were they baptized immediately?

The reason is quite simple. Our Lord Jesus Christ taught:

Matt 28:19-20 NASB

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. "

"He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned. (Mark 16:16 NASB)

Peter also said: **Acts 2:38** (NASB)

"Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

With these inspired passages and examples, one does not need to wonder why the jailer was baptized in the middle of the night. He believed that he must do what the Lord had commanded and so will anyone else. One will not put off their obedience if one truly wants salvation.

Please notice that **after they were baptized they “rejoiced greatly, having believed in God with his whole household.”** (Acts 16:34NASB) The reason they rejoiced after baptism is because their sins were not forgiven and they were not saved until they were baptized. (Acts 8:39)

II. Let's Rehearse Some Things The Alien Sinner Needs To Keep In Mind In Order To Be Saved:

First, all must **realize** that all men stand before God as beggars. Jesus said: ***“Blessed are the poor in spirit...”*** (Matt. 5:3). These are the people who realize that without God they are destitute and that their life is empty without God. These are the people, therefore, who will mourn their sins and seek salvation.

Second, one must **trust** that Jesus is the answer to all of man's moral and spiritual needs. Jesus said: ***“I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.”*** (John 14:6 NASB) God has provided Jesus as the only means of one's salvation.

Third, one must adopt a new attitude of heart through **repentance**. If one's heart is not willing to turn from the things of the world to live as the Lord would have one to live then one is not ready to be saved. Jesus said, ***“I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.”*** (Luke 13:3 NASB)

Fourth, one must confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. The idea of secrecy when it comes to Jesus and discipleship is totally unacceptable.

We read, ***“Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.”*** (John 12:42-43 NASB) Jesus said, ***“Everyone therefore who shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.”*** (Matt 10:32-33 NASB)

Fifth, one must experience the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Paul reminded the Roman Christians that they had experienced Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection in **baptism**.

“Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin;” (Rom 6:3-7 NASB)

Sixth, one must be faithful until death (Rev. 2:10). One must keep the faith and walk the walk of faith. John wrote, ***“But if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.”*** (1 John 1:7 NASB)

By doing these things we will receive the crown of life after death just as Paul was confident of so doing

(2 Tim. 4:7-8). I am not embarrassed to speak of the life to come and that we will stand forth resplendent on the day of our ultimate deliverance (Phil. 1:6). Are you willing to be saved as the Bible teaches???