

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

The question was asked by the Jailer in Acts 16:30. This question should be asked by every man and woman. We also need to see the importance of where we look for the answer to this question. Man cannot direct his own way in matters of religion (Jeremiah 10:23; Proverbs 14:12). No-one should speculate an answer based on his thoughts, feelings or hearsay, rather we should look into the Bible for an authoritative, reliable and adequate solution (2 Timothy 3:15; I Peter 4:11). The book of Acts of the Apostles in the New Testament shows us the answer to the question with several examples of conversion in chapters 2, 8, 9, 10, 11, 16, 18, 19, 22, 24 and 26. These passages reveal how people became saved or Christians or born again at the beginning of the church when the New Covenant went into effect. The summary is that:

First, the word of God must be preached or taught. Jesus told His disciples to go into the entire world, to every nation and to preach the gospel (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:45-47). Jesus came to save us from our sins (Matthew 1:21) and is the only Mediator between man and God (1 Timothy 2:5; Acts 4:12). The gospel or 'good news' is that the life, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus avails us of salvation and redemption (1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Romans 3:24; 2 Timothy 2:10), the grace of God is now for all mankind. Preaching the gospel of Christ is important as it is the means of unleashing God's saving power (Romans 1:16; I Corinthians 1:21). Men and women cannot be saved without first hearing the gospel (Romans 10:13-15).

Second, we must believe the gospel. Faith in God and His Son is absolutely necessary (Hebrews 11:6) for Jesus said, if we refuse to believe in Him we will die in our sins (John 8:24). We learn how faith and hearing are tied together when we read Romans 10:17: *"So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God."* In Acts 8:35-37 a man wanted to be baptized but was told he could not unless he believed. Not all believers act upon their faith. Some believe that Jesus is the Christ but they do not obey Him (John 12:42).

Third, we must be willing to repent of our sins. Sin is a problem for all men and women (Romans 3:23; 6:23). Sin is transgressing God's law (I John 3:4). Jesus taught in Luke 13:3 that all men are to repent. God commands all to repent (Acts 17:30-31). This means to have a change of mind to henceforth please God and its fruit or result is a positive change in personal conduct.

Fourth, we are to confess the name of Jesus Christ before others (Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10, 1 Timothy 6:12). Notice this profession is not confessing that you are a sinner or that you have been saved; it is confessing that you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Acts 8:37-38).

Fifth, we are commanded to be baptized. Baptism is not for babies since Mark 16:16 says one must believe before baptism. Indeed, every example of conversion in the book of Acts mentions baptism. It must be done for the right reason and in the proper mode -an immersion in water for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38, Romans 6:4-13, 1 Peter 3:21)

Hence going back to our original passage, the short answer unto the Jailer was (Acts 16:31) *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."* **In order for him to know what to believe, they preached the gospel unto him and his household (vs 32), his repentance was demonstrated in vs 33 after which he was baptized. That the man who was panic-stricken and at the brink of suicide believed; was rejoicing after being saved is stated in vs 34. All that took place in the same hour of the night!** Interestingly, a similar question in Acts 2:37 *"What shall we do?"* was quickly treated in vs 38-41 where the people hearkened unto

the instruction *'repent and be baptized everyone of you.'* When Saul asked Jesus on the road to Damascus (Acts 22:10) *"What shall I do, Lord?"* The thing to do on getting into the city was announced by a messenger in vs 16 as *'And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.'* Even the purpose of Cornelius being requested to send for Peter was to tell him *"what he ought to do... whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved"* (Acts 10:6, 11:14). On arrival, Peter the apostle preached unto the centurion's household and immediately *'commanded them to be baptized'* in water (Acts 10:48). Were these people given different answers? No! Rather each was told the part most cogent for him based on his current state. The Jailor knew nothing about Jesus and was first given the summary and then the details, the Jews on Pentecost who heard and believed were told the next step, Saul who had believed and repented was told what remained, while Cornelius who had believed and was glorifying God (confessing) had to take the last step into Christ (Gal 3:27-28).

Dear friend, God the Father has done His part for your salvation, Jesus the Son of God and the Holy Spirit have also done their part (Titus 3:4-6). **Have you done what the New Testament requires each person to do in order to be saved?** If not, having heard today, you MUST obey the gospel of Christ -believe, repent, confess Jesus and be baptized to be added to the church of Christ (Acts 2:47). This is the one body of which He is Saviour (Ephesians 1:19-23; 4:4; 5:23). Then you will be able to worship in spirit and in truth as you continue to fellowship with a faithful congregation of the Lord's church and work for Christ (Acts 2:42). Fear not and take the necessary steps for Jesus is able to save unto the uttermost those who trust in him!

For additional information contact:

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