

What must I do to be saved? That is the question the Philippian jailer asked Paul and Silas (Acts 16:30), and that is the most important question any of us could ask. Each and everyone of us need to seek the answer to that question, because we “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23), and “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). The death that sin causes is more serious than physical death, it is spiritual death (separation from God). When Paul wrote to the Ephesians he said “And you hath he quickened (made alive), who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:1). They had been spiritually dead. Our sins make us spiritually dead. Our sin needs to be removed, forgiven, or washed away if we are ever to be in the presence of God, “for the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Corinthians 6:9). God has made it possible for that sin to be removed. He made it possible through His Son (Ephesians 2:1-5).

What did Paul and Silas tell the Philippian jailer when he asked “What must I do to be saved?” They told him “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house” (Acts 16:31). How did they know what he needed to do to be saved? Because what they spoke were the words God had given them. The gospel they preached was not their own (Galatians 1:11-12). It was the words of God (1 Thessalonians 2:13). So, what they told him to do, to be saved, was from God. The gospel of Christ, whether it was preached by

Peter, Paul, or John, was the same gospel, for there is only one gospel (Galatians 1:6-9). They could not add to it, or take away from it (Revelation 22:18-19). They were to “speak the same thing” (1 Corinthians 1:10).

Peter was asked the same thing Paul was asked. When he preached to a multitude in Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost, the multitude asked Peter “what shall we do” (Acts 2:37). They were asking what they needed to do to be forgiven of their sins (or what they needed to do to be saved). They realized they had killed the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God, and they wanted to know what they needed to do to be forgiven. Peter told them “repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38).

Some might think Peter's answer was different than Paul's, but really they were the same. What Paul told the jailer (Acts 16:31), and what Peter told the multitude (Acts 2:38) was what God required them to do to be saved. God requires the same thing from all men, for He is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34), and He is not the author of confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33). In other words, God does not play favorites, nor does He require more of some people, and less of others. He does not tell one person “believe and you will be saved,” and then tell another person “repent and be baptized” and you will be saved. God requires the same thing from all men. Peter did not need to tell the multitude to believe, for they already did, and although it may not say that Paul told the jailer to be baptized, he obviously did, for Paul baptized him “straightway” (“immediately” NKJV) (Acts 16:33). If one

wants to be saved one must do all of what God has said. God says we must: believe (Acts 16:31; Mark 16:15-16); repent (Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30); confess (Romans 10:9-10); and be baptized (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:15-16; 1 Peter 3:21). That was what God required then, and that is what He requires today, for the gospel has not changed.

Does that mean that we are saved by works? Some might, and have, come to that conclusion. Some believe if we DO anything to be saved it is a work, and we are no longer saved by grace. We are saved by grace! Paul said in Ephesians 2:8-9 “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.”

There is a beautiful song that says “Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me..” We are saved by grace! Paul says we are saved by grace: “not of works, lest any man should boast.” We cannot earn our salvation. There is nothing we can do to put God in our debt, to where He owes us salvation. Salvation is a gift of God (Romans 6:23). But, that does not change the fact that there are things **God** says we must do to be saved.

Many say baptism is a work. Therefore they say we do not need to be baptized to be saved. Actually baptism is the one thing that is not a work. Baptism is something that is done to us. We do not baptize ourselves. When Jesus was asked “What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?” (John 6:28), He said, “This is the work of God, that ye believe on

him whom he hath sent. “(John 6:26-29). Jesus told them believing was a work. But who would try to say that if we believed we were earning our salvation? Repentance is something we do. It is a change of mind, and a change of action. But if we repent, we are not earning our salvation. Confession is also something we do. But, God requires us to confess (Romans 10:9-10). Would anyone dare tell God that confession cannot be necessary for salvation, for it is a work, and if we confess we are no longer saved by grace?

What must be understood is that there are different types of works. We are not saved by works of merit (Ephesians 2:8-9). Nor are we saved by works of the law (Galatians 2:16). But, we are saved by works of obedience, for Jesus is the “author of eternal salvation unto all them that **obey** Him” (Hebrews 5:9). You might think of it like this. If someone offered to give you a new car, but you had to come to their house and get the car, did you earn it? Absolutely not! It would be a gift, even though you had to come and get the car. In the same way, salvation is a gift, but there are things God says we must do to receive it.

At this point some might say “it's just a matter of interpretation.” That is a catch all phrase that so many people use to avoid making a decision concerning what the Bible says. But, it is not just a matter of interpretation. The Bible clearly says we are saved by grace (Ephesians 2:8-9), but we must: believe to be saved (Mark 16:16); repent to have the remission of sins (Acts 2:38); confess to be saved (Romans 10:10); and be baptized to be saved (1 Peter 3:21). It is not just a matter of interpretation, it is a matter of

correctly interpreting what God has said. He says we are saved by grace, but there are things we must do to be saved, or have the forgiveness of sins. If we believe that Jesus is the Christ, confess Him as such, repent of our sins, and are baptized (as **God** has commanded), then we will be forgiven of our sins by the grace of God.

All of us need to ask the same question the Philippian jailer asked: “What must I do to be saved?” God has told us what we must do! We need to: believe, repent, confess, and be baptized, so our sins can be washed away by the blood of Christ. God has offered us the gift of eternal life through His Son. Let us accept that gift by obeying Him.

This tract is condensed from a lesson presented at the  
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“They Shall Be Turned  
Unto Fables”

## “Baptism Is Essential? You Believe In Salvation By Works!”

by  
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