

# The Question, "What Must I Do To Be Saved?"

Many people have different ideas on what you have to do to be saved. Some say just believe, while others say that you just have to be a good person. Still there are many who say all you must do is ask Jesus into your heart.

Since the Bible is the Inspired Word of God, we should look to it to find out the answer too perhaps the greatest question, "**What Must I Do To Be Saved?**" The question is asked in various forms three times in the book of Acts. This is what this article will pertain to.

## The Three Times It Is Used And The Answer Received.

The first incident that we want to notice is that of the Philippian jailor found in Acts chapter 16. Paul and Silas had just cast out a demon that angered some people because they were making money from the demon-possessed girl's fortune-telling. The crowd rose up against them and they were beaten and put into prison. At about midnight while Paul and Silas were singing and praying, there was a great earthquake. All the chains were unfastened and the doors were opened. The jailor woke up a little later and saw that the door was open. He assumed the prisoners had escaped and was preparing to kill himself. It was the custom to hold the jailkeeper responsible for the prisoners. If the prisoner escaped, the jailor had to endure the same punishment that the prisoners would have received. This is why the jailor was getting ready to kill himself. Before he could do so, however, Paul cried out and said, "*Do yourself no harm, for we are all here!*" The jailor, trembling with fear, rushed in before Paul and Silas and asked a most serious question. **Acts 16:30, ". . . Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"**

**Paul's response, as found in vs. 31, is "*Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved.*"**

The second incident that I would like for us to consider in found in Acts chapter 2. The apostles had just been given the Spirit promised to them (John 14:26; 16:13; Acts 1:5, 8). Peter goes on to preach the first gospel sermon. He talks of the prophecies in the Old Testament concerning the Messiah, quoting directly from Joel 2:28-32. He tells them that Jesus, a man attested to them by miracles, wonders, and signs, was delivered up and put to death by them but God raised Him up from the dead. He concludes by telling them that "*God has made Him both Lord and Christ – This Jesus whom you crucified.*" When he finished this powerful sermon they were pierced to the heart and asked a most important question. Acts 2:37, "*Brethren, what shall we do?*"

**Peter's response to them is "*Repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins.*"**

The third incident that we will look at is found in Acts chapter 22. Paul is defending himself before the Jews. Paul tells the Jews how he used to persecute the Christians and

put them in prison. He tells how he had received letters from the high priest and all the Council of the elders to go to Damascus and bring these people back to Jerusalem to be punished. But something happened to him. Jesus spoke to him, blinded him, and asked why he was persecuting Him. At this point Paul says, *"What shall I do Lord?"* Jesus told him to go to Damascus and it would be told to him what he must do. At Damascus, Ananias restored Paul's sight and said to him in Acts 22:16,

***"Arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name."***

These are three different instances with three different answers. 1) Just believe, 2) Repent and be baptized, and 3) just be baptized. Why three different answers?

I would like us to consider the answer to this question by using an illustration. Let's say a man is on his way to New Madrid. He considers the question, "How far is it to New Madrid?" He stops and asks someone this question. The reply he is given is that it is fifteen miles to New Madrid. He continues driving along and stops again to ask, "How far is it to New Madrid?" He receives a different reply this time. "It is ten miles to New Madrid." Again he continues on his way and stops one last time. "How far is it to New Madrid?" The reply is that it is five miles to New Madrid. Does the man say in disgust, *"Why is it that nobody knows how far it is to New Madrid!?!"* Certainly not.

### **Practical Application**

The jailor was at the fifteen-mile mark. Consider some things about the jailor. He had most likely never heard a gospel sermon before. The first thing he would have to do is believe. Notice Acts 16:32, *"And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house."* After they spoke the word to him, then he was baptized!

The Jews were at the ten-mile mark. They had just heard the first gospel sermon. In this sermon, Peter tells them how Jesus was the one who was prophesied about. He was the one that was to sit on David's throne. Peter ends his sermon by telling the people that God had made Jesus both Lord and Christ. When they heard this, they were pierced to the heart. When they asked what they needed to do to be saved, what if Peter had told them to believe? It would have been pointless because these people were pierced to the heart! They understood what Peter was saying. He didn't need to tell them to believe, they did already.

Paul was at the five mile mark. He had been struck to the ground by Jesus. Jesus told Paul that he was persecuting Him. Then Jesus told him to go to the city of Damascus. In the account of Acts 9 Paul sat in Damascus for three days waiting to be told what to do. When Ananias came to him, why didn't he tell Paul to believe, repent, and be baptized? Paul had talked to Jesus, he believed. Paul had three days to think about all that he had done, he was repentant. Ananias came to him and told him to be baptized.

It wasn't necessary for all the people to be told the same thing. It depended on

where they all were spiritually. In the conversion of the Eunuch in Acts 8 we are given an example of the Eunuch's confession. Jesus said that whoever confesses me before men, I will confess him before My Father (Matthew 10:32). We have the command and the example of that. ***This is why we believe that you must: Believe, Repent, Confess Jesus as the Son of God, and be Baptized to be saved.***

Have you asked the question, "[What Must I Do To Be Saved?](#)" If you have, what answer were you given? Was it an opinion of man or was it God's command?

– Shane Williams