

“What Must I Do To Be Saved?”

by Bill Crews

The Importance Of The Question

There is no question more important than this question. It has to do with one's salvation from sin or one's forgiveness of his sins by God, and it also has to do eventually with one's eternal destiny. That every accountable person does sin and therefore does need this salvation or forgiveness is shown by Romans 3:23; 1 Kings 8:46; Ecclesiastes 7:20 and 1 John 1:8, 10.

The Philippian Jailer

In Acts 16:30 a jailer at Philippi (probably a Gentile and one who had not heard the word of the Lord or the gospel of Christ) asked Paul and Silas, *“Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”* He was given an answer that was broad enough to include all that God requires: *“Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and all thy house”* (Acts 16:31). The man was **not** told, “Only believe,” or “Simply accept Jesus into your heart as your personal Savior,” or “Just pray to the Lord right now, and ask Him to save you.” Any preacher who would read or quote these two verses and stop there in an effort to teach salvation by faith only is not being honest. Actually, the jailer was unable to *“believe on the Lord Jesus”* without some help just as Romans 10:17 plainly shows: *“So faith cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of the Lord”* and so the story of his conversion continues. Verse 32 says, *“And they spake the word of the Lord unto him, with all that were in his house.”* Now he would be able to *“believe on the Lord Jesus,”* as would his house also — which he and they did! Verse 33 says, *“And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, immediately.”* This was obviously a part of *“the word of the Lord”* which they heard, and a part of the *“believe on the Lord Jesus.”* The story ends like this: *“And he brought them up into his house, and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly with all his house, having believed in God”* (v. 34). To *“believe on the Lord Jesus”* or to *“believe in God”* obviously includes hearing the word of the Lord, accepting it as true, showing that one has repented, and being baptized.

The Jews On Pentecost

In Acts 2:37 certain Jews heard enough of the word of the Lord, or the gospel, to convince them that the Jesus whom they had rejected and crucified had been raised from the dead and was therefore the promised Messiah, to lead them to be *“pricked in their heart”* (convicted of their sin), and to move them to ask, *“What shall we do?”* The apostle Peter, in answer, said: *“Repent ye, and be baptized, everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto (or for) the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”* (v. 38). Their response? *“They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls”* (v. 41). Why were they not given the same answer as the jailer? Because when they asked the question, they had already heard and accepted as true the word of the Lord. But their conversions involved the same steps.

Saul Of Tarsus

In Acts 9:6 Saul of Tarsus, having received a miraculous visit from the Lord which convinced him that Jesus of Nazareth is indeed the Christ, asked, *“Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?”* (KJV) And was told, *“Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.”* Many years later, in Acts 22:10, he described it like this: *“And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus, and it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.”* A convicted, and now believing and temporarily blinded Saul of Tarsus was led into the city of Damascus, and began to pray while he fasted by neither eating nor drinking (Acts 9:8-11). Ananias, a faithful disciple of the Lord, was sent to Saul to tell him what he was to do — believing and penitent, but still unsaved. Ananias, using the power given him by the Lord, restored Saul's sight and then commanded, *“And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized,*

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