



LESSON FOUR

ESD, 2017

WHAT MUST
I DO
TO BE SAVED?

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The Philippian Jailer stood before Paul and Silas, trembling and terrified. The events of the evening had caused him to realize something—he was a sinful man. In his current state, he stood condemned before Almighty God. He was lost, but He didn't want to remain that way. He longed for forgiveness, and he sought redemption and salvation. So he asked the powerful preachers the most important question of his life; “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

Through the ages, many a soul has likewise inquired, “What must I do to be saved?” Indeed, there is no greater question. Sadly, this eternally important question is often met with answers invented by man rather than those found in God's Word. We are not interested in man's ideas; rather, we want to know how God's Word answers this question.

In this lesson, we will search the Scriptures to explore:

Do I need a savior?

What is God's gift?

How is the gift of salvation accepted?

How were the first Christians saved?

DO I NEED A SAVIOR?

Many people in the world today deny the need for a savior. Some living generally good lives – they obey the laws of the land, they are kind, they help others, they are “good people” – believe they are safe with regard to their destiny. Others do not believe in the existence of heaven or hell or that man has an eternal soul, and, therefore, an eternal destiny. Thus, for the question, “Do I need a savior,” to even be relevant, we must first be like the Philippian Jailer and come to the realization that we need saving.

Looking to God’s Word, we see that man and God have differing ideas of “good.” Yes, many people live generally good lives, but does that make them holy? The Scriptural answer is, no. God is perfect (Psalms 18:30) and holy (Psalms 99:3, 5). Even the best of humanity cannot make such a claim. All men have sinned at some point and are guilty in the sight of God. Romans 3:23 states, “**For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.**” Even if a person sinned only one time his whole life, that would be enough to make him a sinner (James 2:10).

What is the consequence of becoming a sinner? Romans 6:23 declares, “**... the wages of sin is death.**” Thankfully, the verse goes on to say that “**the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**” When we commit sin, we earn for ourselves spiritual death, which is eternal condemnation. Since all have sinned and the wages of sin is death, then, yes – we all need saving and we all need a savior!

Is being “good” in the eyes of mankind the same thing as being holy? _____

“For all have _____ and _____ of the glory of God.”

How many sins does it take to become a sinner? _____

“For the _____ of sin is _____ ...”

Do all men need salvation? _____



WHAT IS GOD'S GIFT?

Referencing back to Romans 6:23, the good news is that God has offered us the great gift of eternal life through Jesus. There are a couple of important points to make here.

- We must understand that salvation is a gift. Our sin *earns* the wages of death, but God *offers* the gift of salvation. There is no amount of good we can do to outweigh our sin and earn our salvation. Without God's gift, we are lost. The Bible calls the unearned gift of God "grace," which is "unmerited favor."
- The way that God offers His grace is through His Son, Jesus Christ.

God sent Jesus from heaven to our world to live life as a man. Jesus experienced all the pains, difficulties, and temptations of human life, but He did so without ever sinning (Hebrews 4:15). Having perfectly obeyed God as a man, Jesus then offered Himself as a sacrifice for man's sins when He was crucified. At the cross, Jesus paid the wages of death that our sins had earned (1 Corinthians 15:3; Galatians 1:4; 1 Peter 2:24).

The amazing part is God and Jesus offered forgiveness, even though we were and are unworthy of such love. God did not send Jesus because we had proved great love for Him but because He loved us (1 John 4:10)! Romans 5:8 says, "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Such is the essence of God's grace! Even while we were guilty of sin; even while we were lost and rebellious; even though we had done nothing to deserve God's love — He loved us so much that He made a way for us to be redeemed by giving His Son Jesus to die in our place.

While death is the wage we earn through sin, eternal life is a _____ from God.

Jesus was "...in all points _____ as we are, yet _____ sin." (Hebrews. 4:15)

Did God send Jesus because we had earned such a gift? _____

"But God _____ his own love towards us, in that while we were still _____ Christ _____ for us."

HOW IS THE GIFT OF SALVATION ACCEPTED?

Now that we have established the need for salvation and that God has offered salvation through Jesus, we can circle back to the primary question of this study, "What must I do to be saved?" Or, in other words, "How do I accept the gift of salvation that God has offered?" The key to answering this question is Jesus. Just as He is the one that paid the price for our sin, He is the way by which we accept God's gift. Jesus says in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." To receive the gift of life Jesus offers, we must walk in the way He leads and obey the truth He teaches. So, what did Jesus say about salvation?

First, Jesus shows that to be saved, we must **hear** the truth. Jesus spent much of His time preaching the good news of the Kingdom. He was looking for people who wanted to hear the truth, and He taught that truth to them. What was the goal of Jesus' teaching? How did He expect people to respond to what they heard?

The foundational response to Jesus' teaching was **belief**. Without believing in Jesus and His words, it was (and is) impossible to be saved. In John 8:24, Jesus warns, "... if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins."

With belief comes change. Jesus says in Luke 13:3, "... unless you **repent** you will all likewise perish." Much more than feeling bad for sin, repentance is the

changing of one's mind and focus, the active decision to stop committing sin, and the commitment to begin obeying Jesus' commands.

There is more that Jesus expected. Once a person believes and repents, we learn in Matthew 10:32-33 he must then **confess** Jesus. "Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven." What did Jesus expect His followers to confess? He expected them to confess what they believed about Him. In Matthew 16, Jesus asks His disciples who they thought He was; Peter responds, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." The Lord commends Peter for this confession.

Ultimately, Jesus expected His followers to be "born again." This was a major focus of His conversation with a Jewish ruler named Nicodemus in John 3. Nicodemus is told, "Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Jesus goes on to clarify this enigmatic statement by saying, "Most assuredly I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." Jesus speaks of conversion, or spiritual rebirth, as being born of the water and the Spirit.

How is one born of water and the Spirit? The wording of Jesus' statement, in the context of John 3, points to the act of **baptism**. To further illustrate this point, we can look to Jesus' final words to His disciples. Before returning to Heaven, Jesus gave specific instructions as to what He expected of them. Jesus commanded His disciples to:

- "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 28:19)
- "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned." (Mark 16:15-16)
- "... repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations." (Luke 24:47)

Jesus' command was quite clear – the disciples were to preach the gospel so people could hear the truth. Upon hearing the truth, if people believed, repented of their sins, confessed their faith, and were baptized for the remission of their sins, then they would be forgiven. The process of conversion, or being born

again, finds its climax in the obedient act of baptism. It is at this point that a sinner obtains remission of sins, or, in other words, after baptism a believer's sins are washed away and they are forgiven!

Who is the way, the truth, and the life? _____

"If you do not _____ that I am he, you will die in your sins."

"Unless you _____, you will all likewise perish."

Peter confessed that Jesus was the _____, the _____ of the living God.

To be born again, one must be born of the _____ and the _____.

"He who _____ and is _____ will be saved."

Are a sinner's sins washed away before or after baptism? _____



HOW WERE THE FIRST CHRISTIANS SAVED?

Many have questioned whether first-century Christians followed the pattern of salvation spoken of by Jesus. To find out, we look to the book of Acts. Often referred to as a sequel to the gospels, Acts tells the story of how the apostles fulfilled Jesus' commission to "go into all the world and make disciples of all the nations ..." Thus, throughout Acts we find several conversion examples. Let's review a few to see if they followed the pattern originally commanded by Jesus. Be sure to read the passages listed below and then review the provided highlights.

The First Converts – Acts 2:1-47

Notice the similarities in what Jesus commanded His disciples to do and what took place on the day of Pentecost:

- Peter preached to the people.
- Many people were "cut to the heart." This expression shows that they believed what Peter preached, particularly that Jesus was Lord and Christ.
- Peter commanded the people to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins.

It is important to consider the emphasis Peter placed on baptism. Peter said it was "for the remission of sins." If baptism is for the remission of sins, then sins cannot be remitted, or taken away, prior to baptism. Also note the similarity between Jesus' words to Nicodemus in John 3 ("unless one is born of water and the Spirit ...") and the command of Peter, "... be baptized for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." The connection is evident, and Peter's sermon helps us solidify our understanding of what Jesus was teaching and pointing toward in John 3.

The Ethiopian Eunuch – Acts 8:26-39

While this example involves one preacher and one hearer, we see the same pattern commanded by Jesus and found in Acts 2:

- Philip preached Jesus to the eunuch.
- The Eunuch understood from Philip's preaching that he must be baptized.
- The Eunuch believed Jesus was the Son of God, he confessed that belief, and he was baptized by Philip.

Verse 39 tells us that the Eunuch “**went on his way rejoicing.**” The eunuch did not have a reason to rejoice before; but when he believed in Jesus and was baptized, his sins were washed away. Nothing brings real joy like knowing that our sins have been washed away!

Peter told the crowds on Pentecost, “_____ and be _____ for the _____ of sins.”

According to Jesus (Luke 24:47) and Peter in Acts 2:38, what is the purpose of baptism? (Place a mark in one of the boxes *below*.)

☐

An outward sign of inward faith

☐

Remission of sins

☐

A ritual for people already washed of their sins

Philip preached _____ to the eunuch.

What was the eunuch’s response to Philip’s preaching? _____

The Philippian Jailer – Acts 16:23-34

Let us consider the story from our introduction, that of a jailer in the city of Philippi. Notice the events that take place after the man asks, “**Sirs, what must I do to be saved?**”

- Paul says, “**believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.**”
- Paul then speaks “**the Word of the Lord**” to the man and his family. Paul is preaching the gospel.
- Upon hearing Paul’s message, the jailer cares for Paul and washes his stripes. This is quite a change! It is clear this man has repented.
- The man and his family are immediately baptized.
- The family rejoices.

Some people make the mistake of stopping in verse 31, where Paul says, “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved ...” They then teach that all one must do to be saved is to have faith. Paul didn’t stop there, however, and neither should we. That was simply the introduction to Paul’s sermon, because verse 32 says Paul spoke the Word of the Lord. What was the jailer’s response to the full sermon? He was **baptized**. Notice he didn’t delay being baptized; he did so immediately. Clearly, the jailer realized if he wished to be saved, his newfound faith must lead him to obey the Lord’s command of baptism.

Saul of Tarsus – Acts 9:1-17; Acts 22:6-16; Acts 26:9-20

The conversion of Saul of Tarsus (afterward known as Paul) is told in three passages in Acts with the final two accounts being in Paul’s own words. Paul’s conversion was unique as it began with a vision of Jesus Himself! The purpose of Jesus appearing to Paul is explained in Acts 26:16; so that, having seen the risen Lord, Paul would be qualified to later become an apostle. But, the actual process of salvation was not any different for Paul than for the others – he was saved in the same way every other disciple is saved. Notice these facts:

- Even though Jesus spoke to Paul directly, He still sent Ananias, a preacher, to inform Paul what he should do to be saved (Acts 22:10).
- Paul clearly believed in Jesus and had repented. While he used to “... do many things contrary to the name of Jesus,” he later preached the gospel to others, encouraging them to repent (Acts 26:9, 20).
- Paul spent three days fasting and praying before Ananias arrived (Acts 9:9). When Ananias did come, he told Paul, “Why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16).

Regard especially Acts 22:16 and that last bullet point. Paul had seen Jesus and had spent three days in continual prayer while fasting. Had his sins been forgiven yet? No! Ananias told Paul to be baptized and wash away his sins. Belief and repentance alone are not enough to have one’s sins washed away. One fully trusts in Jesus by obeying Him, and this obedience involves being baptized as Jesus commanded. Such obedience is what it means to “call upon the name of the Lord.” Some people today claim that to be saved, all a person must do is repeat a short “sinner’s prayer.” But if three days of praying and fasting were not enough to wash Paul’s sins away, why would we think a man-made “sinner’s prayer” is enough for us?

Did Paul stop his sermon after telling the jailer to “believe on the Lord Jesus”?

After hearing Paul preach the Word of God, when were the Jailer and his family baptized? (Circle One)

- A few days later
- A few hours later
- Immediately

Even though Paul saw a vision of Jesus, did he still need to have a preacher tell him how to be saved? -----

How many days did Paul spend fasting and praying after seeing the vision of Jesus? -----

Did three days of praying wash Paul's sins away? -----

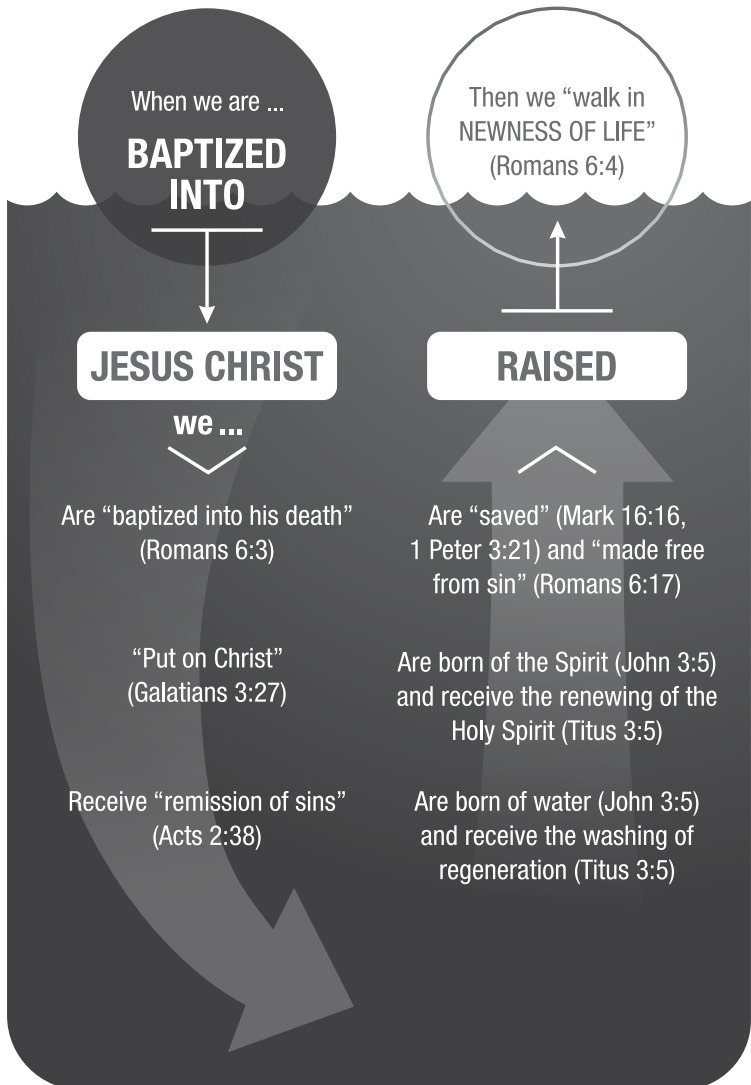
Ananias told Paul, “Arise and be -----, and ----- away your sins, ----- on the name of the Lord.”

CONCLUSION

When we study the teachings of Jesus, we find that He established a simple pattern for obtaining the forgiveness of sins. We also see that the apostles persevered in preaching that pattern, and the first converts to Christianity were saved by following the same pattern Jesus had commanded. Piecing together the various passages and examples, we see exactly what that pattern was and still is today:

- **Hear** the gospel (Matthew 28:19; Romans 10:17).
- **Believe** in Jesus (Mark 16:16; Acts 8:37; Acts 16:31).
- **Repent** of sins (Luke 13:3; Luke 24:47; Acts 2:38).
- **Confess** faith in Jesus (Matthew 10:32-33; Acts 8:37).
- **Be baptized** for the remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16).

What happens IN BAPTISM?



Name

Email Address

