

THE EXAMINER



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"What Must I Do To Be

Saved?" - by Eugene Crawley

This is the greatest question ever to challenge the minds of responsible persons before God. It is the most important question that has ever been yours to consider. It is a Bible question and therefore has a Bible answer. This question is found recorded in **Acts 16:30** and was asked by an unbeliever, the Philippian jailer, who had charge of keeping Paul and Silas, imprisoned for preaching the truth. This question is important because it has to do with one's eternal welfare; it has to do with the most valuable possession of man - his soul! When one learns the Bible answer to this question in regard to himself, and will obey from the heart the gospel of Christ, he will then be made free from sin and become a servant of righteousness, a child of God. (**Rom. 6:17, 18.**) He must then continue in the doctrine of the Son of God, being faithful unto death to receive the crown of life. (**Matt. 10:22; Rev. 2:10.**)

WHAT THE QUESTION IS NOT

Not A Question of What I Believe -

As we study this vital question, I suggest to you that it is not a question of "What must I believe?" Even though faith is essential to salvation, and without faith it is impossible to please God (**Heb. 11:6**), still it is not a question of "What must I believe?" One certainly must believe the truth, but this is not a question of what must one believe, but rather what must one do. Belief, or faith, by itself is insufficient. One cannot be saved by faith alone. Many passages clearly show this to be the truth, such as **Mark 16: 15, 16; Acts 2:38; James 2-24.**

Not A Question of How I Feel - Neither is it a question of "How must I feel?" Truly one should feel good. He should be joyful, but not until after he has been saved from sin. There is the very popular theory in the religious world today that one must have a "feeling better felt than told, and once one gets it he can't lose it, and if he does lose it he never had it." Yet, my friend, this is a doctrine that does not have scriptural ground upon which to stand. Feelings may deceive a person. In fact, many have been so

deceived. A good example of this is Saul of Tarsus; he was deceived by his feelings and by his thinking. Hear him in **Acts 23:1** where he said, "Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." This was after his conversion that this statement was made by him. It was after he had been for some time persecuting the disciples of the Lord, Christians, doing all within his power to stamp out the religion of Jesus Christ. He had made havoc of the church in Jerusalem, and was on his way to Damascus to continue his efforts of destruction when the Lord appeared to him on the way. But he says he did all this in good conscience; yes, he felt like he was doing the right thing. See how he was deceived by his feelings? So surely we can see that it is not a question of how one must feel. Rejoicing always comes after salvation, not before. Recall the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch, to whom Philip "preached Jesus." As they went on their way and came to a certain water, the eunuch desired to be baptized. Is there any record of where he had rejoiced before? In **verse 39 of Acts 8** we read, "And when they were come up out of the water (verse 38 relates the fact that he was baptized) the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip that the eunuch saw him no more, and he went on his way rejoicing." See, after he had obeyed the Lord's conditions of pardon,

including baptism, thereby being saved, he rejoiced (he felt good) and thus had reason.

Not A Question of What I Experience - Further I suggest to you that this is not a question of "What must I experience?" Another popular doctrine among some religious people is that one must have a "Christian experience" before he is saved. Now, if only you will stop to consider, you can see that this is not even reasonable, much less scriptural. A Christian is a saved person. How, then, could one who is not a Christian have a "Christian experience"? Surely you can see that if he must have this experience to become a Christian, that it could not be a "Christian" experience. It does not make sense, does it? Why, then, follow something that has no scriptural basis, and is not required by the Lord in the New Testament for one to be saved? Such definitely is not New Testament doctrine, or language. Therefore, it is not a question of what one must experience to be saved.

Not A Question of What Someone Else Must Do - Then, too, I suggest to you that it is not a question of "What must someone else do that I may be saved?" It is not a question of what God must do. He has already done His part. He gave His Son to come to earth and die, thus sealing His will with His shed blood. He loves us and gives us

opportunities to meet His conditions of salvation. And it is not a question of what Christ must do. We just noticed the sacrifice He made. Besides, He is not willing that any perish, but that all come to repentance. (**2 Pet. 3:9**.) Neither is it a question of what the Holy Spirit must do. He has inspired the writing of the New Testament, under which we live today, and wherein we find God's will for us. And, in addition, we are told in **Rev. 22:17** that the Spirit invites men to accept and obey the Lord.

WHAT THE QUESTION IS

A Question of What Must I Do - It is therefore the question, "What must I do to be saved?" It shows individual responsibility. Every person who is accountable (responsible) unto God must meet the conditions by himself and for himself. Others may encourage and assist, but they can not obey for him.

A Question of What Must I DO - And it is a question of what must I DO! There is indeed something one must do in order to be saved. He must obey the Christ who died that we might live. He must meet the conditions as given in the last will and testament of Christ that He sealed and dedicated with His own precious blood. Salvation is the desired end - Christ offers it. What then must I do to receive it? What must I do to be saved? The condition, spiritually, of the individual is important as we answer

this question.

The Alien Sinner

If one is a believer in Christ as God's Son, he need not be told to believe. But, let us note the case of the man who asked the question. He was an unbeliever, one who had never believed the truth, had never believed that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. After Paul and Silas told him to believe, they proceeded to tell him what to believe, for listen to the verses immediately following **verse 31** where he was told to believe on the Lord: "And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house." He did not know what to believe, had never heard the gospel, therefore was told, not only "to believe," but what to believe. The very next verse, so often overlooked or skipped by many, indicates that they told him about baptism, a command of the Lord, for the scripture states, "... he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his straightway." Now, here was the man who asked this important question, and here we find the answer for him, and all other unbelievers: believe on the Lord, repent of sins (he manifested his repentance by washing their stripes), and be baptized as the word of the Lord directs.

But, suppose a person is already one who believes that Jesus is God's Son; he has already heard the word

of God and believes it. We have an example of such recorded in **Acts 2**. Peter and the other apostles had preached the gospel (the word of the Lord) and **verse 37** states, "...when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart" (ASV renders this, "they were cut to the heart"). This shows that they believed it. They then said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Their question was the same in meaning as the jailer's. They realized their guilt and desired to know what they must do to be saved. Note that their question also was, "What shall we do?" They, too, realized there was something for them to do. What was Peter's answer? In verse 38 he said, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." They were thus told the same as was the jailer, with the exception of "believe," for they already believed.

Saul of Tarsus is an example of one who believed and had repented of his sins when Ananias came to him in Damascus to tell him what the Lord would have him to do. Remember, the Lord had told him on the way to "arise and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." (**Acts 9:60 As recorded in Acts 22:16** where Paul is relating his conversion, he gives us Ananias' language to him: "And now why tarriest thou, arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." You ask, "Did He not require the same of all of them?" Yes, He requires the same of all men - the difference here is only that some had already met some of the conditions required by the Lord.

The Child of God

If you are a child of God, there, too, is something you must do to be saved eternally. "Be thou faithful unto death," said the Lord, "and I will give unto thee the crown of life." (**Rev. 2:10**.) One must be faithful in both worship and service unto God to be granted entrance into that everlasting kingdom of our Lord. (**2 Pet. 1:5-11**)

The Erring Child of God

If, however, one has become a child of God, and afterwards has erred from the faith, has become indifferent and lukewarm, hear the inspired writers as they give the conditions upon which forgiveness is offered. "Repent of this thy wickedness and pray God if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee." (**Acts 8:22**.) "Confess your faults one to another and pray one for another that ye might be healed." (**Jas. 5:16**.) "If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (**1Jno. 1:9**.)

Whoever you are, if you have reached the age of accountability, you are in one of these classes. You are either an unbeliever, an unpenitent believer, a believer who has repented, a child of God, or an erring child of God. Are you willing to do that which is required of you in order to be saved? Surely so!! **Via Gospel Guide Vol 1, Number 4 - April 1969**