“WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?”

A. “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16:30).

1. A question recorded two more times in Acts.

Acts 2:37 – Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, & said to Peter & the rest of the apostles, "Men & brethren, what shall we do?"

Acts 9:6 – So he, trembling & astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" Then the Lord said to him, "Arise & go into the city, & you will be told what you must do."

2. Just about anyway you ask that question stresses its importance.

a. “What must I do…” – emphasizing that salvation requires that we do something.

b. “What must I do…” – emphasizing the necessity & urgency of what is required…

c. “What must I do…” – emphasizing that no one can do for you what is required...

3. So, it is the right question to ask, & it is an important one too, because it has an eternal consequence for us.

4. Salvation not only refers to the forgiveness of our sins, but also to our eternal abode.

a. Heaven is the tabernacle of God with men (Rev 21:1-4); a place of rest for the saved, the people of God (Heb 4:8-9): eternal salvation!

b. Hell is a place where the fire is not quenched (Mark 9:44); a place where the unsaved are tormented day & night forever (Rev 20:10): eternal condemnation!
B. To get an accurate answer to the question, “What must I do to be saved?” we must go to the right source.

1. Even the wicked king Zedekiah asked Jeremiah, “Is there any word from the Lord?” (Jer 37:17).

2. Paul asked the church at Rome, “What does the Scripture say?”, before he told them what God’s Word said (Rom 4:3).

[Today we are asking the question, “What does God say we must do to be saved?”

The Bible teaches 5 distinct stages that one must pass through in order to be saved.

And these stages don’t require years or even days to complete; they can be completed within a single hour of your life (Acts 16:25-34).]

I. HEAR GOD’S WORD IN THE GOSPEL OF JC

[Hearing God’s word doesn’t mean we wait for God to speak to us directly or personally.

Nor does it mean that we must accept all preaching that claims to represent the word of God.

What it does mean is that we must HEAR the word of God & the gospel of Christ in particular (2 Tim 3:16-17; Rom 1:16).]

Mark 16:15 – And He said to them, “Go into all the world & preach the gospel to every creature.

Acts 16:32 – Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him & to all who were in his house.

John 6:45 – It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God.’ Therefore everyone who has heard & learned from the Father comes to Me.

Luke 8:15 – But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble & good heart, keep it & bear fruit with patience.

Acts 11:13-14 – [Angel told Cornelius] ‘Send men to Joppa, & call for Simon whose surname is Peter, 14 who will tell you words by which you & all your household will be saved.’

Eph 1:13 – In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,

Rom 10:17 – So then faith comes by hearing, & hearing by the word of God.
A. There are 3 points relating to hearing God’s Word.

1. We must accept that God has the exclusive right to be heard; & that He has communicated through His son (Heb 1:2).
   a. “You hear Him” (Mark 9:1-7)
   b. “He…speaks the words of God” (John 3:34)
   c. “All authority” (Matt 28:18)
   d. “Far above all” (Eph 1:21-23)
   e. “Do all in His name” (Col 3:17)
   f. “The word that I have spoken, the same will judge you in the last day” (John 12:28)

2. We must to put forth the effort to hear Him.
   a. “Searched the Scriptures daily” (Acts 17:11)
   b. “Ask…Seek…Knock” (Matt 7:7-8)
   c. “Give diligence (study)” (2 Tim 2:15)
   d. “Grow in the grace & knowledge of…” (2 Pet 3:18)

3. We must hear Him carefully.
   b. “Take heed what [content] you hear” (Mark 4:24)
   c. “Test all things; hold fast…good” (1 Thess 5:21)

[The point is that we simply cannot believe everything we hear in regard to the question, “What must I do to be saved?”

We have to go to the right source for what we hear. And the right source—the N. T. Scripture—tells us that in order to be saved we must first hear the word of God.

The 2nd stage…]

II. WE MUST BELIEVE WHAT GOD REVEALED ABOUT HIS SON JESUS CHRIST

A. The principle of belief is tied exclusively to hearing the word of God (Rom 10:10, 17; Mk 16:16; Heb 11:6).

1. Belief is not a mysterious gift given by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 2:10-13), belief is ours when we accept what God has revealed about Jesus.

  John 20:30-31 – And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, & that believing you may have life in His name.
2. Notice the effects of belief & disbelief:

John 8:24 – Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.

John 3:16 – For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

3. But sadly, many will rest their salvation entirely on their belief in the facts of the gospel – but more than belief is required.

John 12:42 – Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue;

The demons have more faith in Jesus Christ than did the ruling Jews who believed in Him, because at least the demons confessed their faith that Jesus was the Son of God (Mk 8:29; Jas 2:19). And yet demons reside in “hell” or tartarus; they are in “everlasting chains of darkness for the judgment of the great day” 2 Pet 2:4; Jude 6).


III. WE MUST REPENT OR CHANGE OUR MINDS ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

A. Repentance is a change of heart, not only about sin, but also about the message of the gospel (explain).

Matt 21:28-31 – But what do you think? A man had two sons, & he came to the first & said, 'Son, go, work today in my vineyard.' 29 He answered & said, 'I will not,' but after ward he regretted it & went. 30 Then he came to the second & said likewise. And he answered & said, 'I go, sir;' but he did not go. 31 Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said to Him, “The first.”

Acts 2:38 – Then Peter said to them, "Repent, & let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; & you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 3:19 – Repent therefore & be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,

Acts 11:18 – When they heard these things they became silent; & they glorified God, saying, "Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life."

Acts 17:30 – Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent,

2 Peter 3:9 – The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.
1. We will change our minds when we believe that there is no other name than Jesus by which we can be saved (Acts 4:12).

2. ... that we must have God’s forgiveness to be saved (Acts 2:38).

3. ...that Jesus is the Author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him (Heb 5:9).

4. ...that the goodness of God sent Jesus to save us when we were without strength (Rom 2:4; 5:8).

5. We will change our minds when we learn to have godly sorrow for disobeying God & living without His hope (2 Cor 7:10; Eph 2:12).

6. WHEN we change our minds THEN we begin to change our lives by obeying His commands.

7. To refuse to repent brings the direst results of all; we shall perish (Luke 13:1-5; 3:7-14).

[The 4th stage...]

IV. WE MUST CONFESS THE TRUTH ABOUT JESUS

A. Our confession of faith takes place when we state before others that we believe Jesus is the Christ the Son of God.

Acts 8:37 – Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered & said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

Matt 10:32 – Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven.

Rom 10:10 – For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, & with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

1 Tim 6:12 – Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called & have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

1. The word confession means to say the same thing as another; to agree with.

2. What we are agreeing with when we confess our faith in Jesus Christ – is the Word of God.
This confession is a natural response to all the preceding stages.

But it more than that, it is an essential step in our salvation—we cannot be saved without it!

[The 5\textsuperscript{th} & final \textit{stage} in one’s initial salvation & the final answer to the question, \textit{“What must I do to be saved”} is...]

V. WE MUST BE \textit{BAPTIZED FOR THE REMISSION OF OUR SINS}

A. That is correct, the forgiveness of sins is inextricably tied (incapable of being disentangled) to water baptism.

B. Most of the religious world will admit that it is good to be baptized.

1. They will also admit that because Jesus was baptized, we should be too, but in their view, baptism is NOT essential to one’s salvation.

2. Let’s see if the Word of God agrees with that point of view.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textbf{Acts 2:37-38} – Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, & said to Peter & the rest of the apostles, “Men & brethren, what shall we do?” 38 Then Peter said to them, “Repent, & let every one of you be \textit{baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins}; & you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
\item \textbf{Acts 22:14-16} – Then he said, ‘The God of our fathers has chosen you that you should know His will, & see the Just One, & hear the voice of His mouth. 15 For you will be His witness to all men of what you have seen & heard. 16 And now why are you waiting? \textit{Arise & be baptized, & wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.’” – [He did immediately Acts 9:18]
\item \textbf{Mark 16:16} – \textit{He who believes & is baptized will be saved}; but he who does not believe will be condemned.
\item \textbf{1 Peter 3:21} – There is also \textit{an antitype} [to Noah’s salvation by water] \textit{which now saves us — baptism} (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,
\item \textbf{2 Tim 2:10} – Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the \textit{salvation which is in Christ Jesus} with eternal glory.
\item \textbf{Gal 3:27} – For as many of you as were \textit{baptized into Christ} have put on Christ.
\end{itemize}
3. It has been argued that “for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38) means “with a view toward the finished work of Christ on the cross (Eph 1:17; Col 1:14).

   a. Those who so argue try to imply that baptism has nothing to do with the “remission of sins”.

   b. But Peter was responding to their question, “what shall we do”, and then he explained the outcome (remission of sins) of their actions (repentance & baptism).


   a. The apostles were not implying faith alone, because those who heard the gospel were not considered to be faithful or having believed until they were baptized (Acts 16:15; 16:33-34).

A. Today, think about your soul in terms of what the Bible says about salvation.

   1. If you died right now, would you be saved; would you go to Heaven?

B. Have you done those things you need to do to be right with God?

   1. Have you heard the Word of God in such a way that you are willing to believe that Jesus is the Son of God?

   2. Will your belief cause you to repent, turn from sin, & turn to God?

   3. Have you confessed that Jesus Christ is the Son of God?

   4. Have you been baptized for the remission of your sins?

   5. If not, we are pleading with you to not delay in this matter. We love your soul. God created & loves your soul. And we want nothing more than your salvation.