



Northside Proclaimer

Proclaiming The Word Of The Lord

1 Thessalonians 1:8

Northside Church Of Christ Welcomes You!

June 21, 2015

“What Did Sinners Do To Be Saved?”

Bryan Garlock

To learn how early sinners were saved we must first understand how the Bible is structured. First, we cannot appeal to the Old Testament for salvation because “...it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins” (Heb. 10.4). Next, we must not appeal to the letters of Romans through Revelation because these letters are written to Christians only. They give hope and encouragement and instruct Christians on how to worship, serve God, etc. Therefore while the letters certainly include general statements about the Christian’s steps previously taken to become such, they are not intended to tell a sinner how to be saved. Finally, Matthew through John is not intended to teach sinners about the steps necessary for salvation either. Indeed, they certainly include general statements about salvation but, more importantly, the books are meant to instill faith in the sinner by presenting the facts of the gospel (John 20.30-31).

To further illustrate what we are saying, let’s examine some examples of appealing to passages not intended to teach a sinner how to be saved. John the apostle wrote, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1.9). Since this book is written to saints, it must be understood that a sinner cannot appeal to this verse for salvation. Further, one cannot go to Luke 18.9-14 for justification. Many believe this is an example of a sinner praying for salvation, which, they say, is an example of the famous, but erroneous, “sinner’s prayer.” It must be understood that this man, the tax collector, was not praying for salvation, but praying for forgiveness as a child of God. Remember, since he was a Jew, he was automatically a child of God at birth. Finally, many erroneously appeal to John 3.16 for salvation. Certainly Jesus said, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” However, Jesus also said, “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved...” (Mark 16.16). Which is it Jesus? It’s both! These two verses are general statements about salvation, but are not to be taken alone. One cannot appeal to Mark 16.16 as if that is all one must do to be saved, as one cannot appeal to John 3.16 as if there is nothing to do but believe. Simply put, John 3.16 and Mark 16.16 do not teach everything a sinner must do to be saved!

To understand what sinners did to be saved we must go to the book that provides the facts about salvation; the book of Acts also known as the book of conversions. Throughout this book we find statements such as, “...what shall we do?” (2.37), “...Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” (16.30) and “...What shall I do, Lord?” (22.10), etc.

When one studies each conversion found within the book, the inescapable conclusion is simple. Sinners heard the word preached by the apostles and Christians, believed the spoken word, repented of their sins, confessed their faith in Christ Jesus and were immersed in Christ for the remission of their sins.

Unfortunately this isn’t enough for many. They want to appeal to passages that are either not meant for them or they are attracted to one verse in exclusion of other verses. As seen above, this kind of approach to the Bible is soul damning.

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Announcements

- Remember the shut in's.
- Pray for the church and one another.
- Remember the spiritual sick among us.
- Call or email me to add announcements, thanks.
- Remember Sister Phyllis Owen.
- Kid's drill class today at 4 PM.
- Remember our upcoming gospel meeting! July 12th – 15th Flyers coming soon!

Chronological Bible Reading Plan

Jun 21 1 Kgs 10-11, 2 Chr 9
 Jun 22 Prov 30-31
 Jun 23 1 Kgs 12-14
 Jun 24 2 Chr 10-12
 Jun 25 1 Kgs 15:1-24, 2 Chr 13-16
 Jun 26 1 Kgs 15:25-16:34, 2 Chr 17
 Jun 27 1 Kgs 17-19

It should be noted that not every conversion in Acts is the same as far as the written record is concerned, but is the same as far as obeying commands for salvation. What we mean is, Luke may have recorded one convert to have repented and been immersed while recording another convert to have believed and been immersed, etc. This is seen throughout the book. Did one convert only repent and was baptized while the other only believed and was baptized with the exclusion of repentance? Who would so contend?

It was not necessary for Luke to record every single thing a sinner was to do in every single example of conversion. Thus it was only necessary for him to record what the sinner lacked. For instance, the Jews on Pentecost already believed when they asked, "...what shall we do?" (2.37). However, the Philippian jailor had, more than likely, never heard of Jesus and therefore was commanded to, "...Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household" (16.31) and so "they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house" (16.32). Since he had never heard the word and since faith comes by hearing the word (Rom. 10.17), the jailor lacked such and such was provided to him. While Luke does not record the jailor repenting and confessing his faith, he does record his baptism. Did the jailor repent and confess? Absolutely. This is obvious by the fact that Jesus taught and commanded both repentance and confession. Surely he obeyed the other commands of Jesus! When one argues that not every conversion is the same because Luke did not record them the same he is treading on dangerous ground.

Consider the following: A man ask you for directions from the church building to Wal-Mart. Imagine in your mind the directions you would give him. Next, a man ask for directions from Pizza Hut to Wal-Mart. Now, imagine the directions you would give him. Are they different? Yes, but only in the sense that the first man is traveling from the church building and the second man from Pizza Hut. It is not necessary for the man traveling from Pizza Hut to start at the church building. Yet, it is necessary for the man traveling from the church building to pass by Pizza Hut.

This is how the conversions are recorded in the Bible. Preachers did not need to tell everyone to believe, repent, confess and be immersed every time. Some already believed and thus it was only necessary to tell them to repent, confess and be immersed, etc. If a preacher came upon a man who claimed, "I believe that Jesus is the Son of God," the only thing he lacked was repentance and baptism. Likewise, the man traveling to Wal-Mart from the church building and the man traveling from Pizza Hut to Wal-Mart would travel the same exact way though they started at different points. It would be pointless to give the man at Pizza Hut directions from the church building to Wal-Mart!

Finally, every conversion included the same thing or else each convert was taught a different gospel (Gal. 1.6-10). Therefore, though not recorded, each convert heard the word, believed the word, repented, confessed faith and was immersed in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins. If you'll do that today, you can be saved too!

	Heard	Believed	Repented	Confessed	Baptized
Jews	2.14-36, 41	2.37	2.38		2.38, 41
Samaritans	8.12	8.12			8.12
Simon	Implied	8.13			8.13
Eunuch	8.35	8.37		8.37	8.38-39
Saul	Acts 22.13-16	22.10	Acts 9.11 implied	22.10	22.16
Cornelius	10.34-43	15.9			10.48
Lydia	16.14				16.15
Jailor	16.32	16.34	16.33 implied		16.33-34
Corinthians	18.8	18.8			18.8
Ephesians	19.4-5				19.5