

## “Save Yourself” Or “Be Saved”?

### Introduction.

1. This lesson will focus on Acts 2:40.

ACT 2:40 And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation!"

2. Peter, being filled with the Holy Spirit, addressed the Jewish multitude on the day of Pentecost - the first Pentecost following the resurrection of Christ. (Acts 2:14-36).
3. He convinced thousands of the Jews that they had crucified the Son of God by the hands of godless men. (Acts 2:23).
4. He convinced them that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God and He was exalted at the right hand of God in heaven. (Acts 2:33-36).
5. The Bible tells us that many of them were “pierced to the heart” and filled with godly sorrow. (Acts 2:37).
  - a. Sorrow alone is not sufficient. Many a person has sorrow, but has no desire to repent and turn to God.
  - b. Only “godly sorrow” leads to true repentance. (2 Cor. 7:10).

2CO 7:10 For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

- c. David manifested this kind of sorrow after his sin with Bathsheba. (Psa. 51:2-4).

PSA 51:2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin.

PSA 51:3 For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me.

PSA 51:4 Against Thee, Thee only, I have sinned, And done what is evil in Thy sight, So that Thou art justified when Thou dost speak, And blameless when Thou dost judge.

6. In response to their question, “Brethren, what shall we do?” Peter gave this answer. (Acts 2:38).

ACT 2:38 And Peter said to them, "Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

- a. Peter commanded them to “Repent,” that is, to change their lives by turning from evil to God.

- 1) These men had put to death the Son of God through the hands of “godless men.” (Acts 2:23).

ACT 2:23 this Man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.

- 2) They had also committed countless other sins in their lives, and stood condemned without a Savior.

- b. He also commanded them to “be baptized.” “Baptizo” [bahp tee zoh] translated “be baptized” means “to dip, submerge, immerse.”
- c. He further commanded them to “be baptized” “for the forgiveness of your sins.”
  - 1) “For” is not used in the sense of “because of, on account of.”
  - 2) The Greek preposition ‘eis’ [ace] means, “into, to, unto, in order to receive.”
  - 3) It is a forward looking word, and does not have a backward-looking meaning.
  - 4) It has the same meaning here that it has in Matthew 26:28 and Luke 24:47.

MAT 26:28 for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many **for** [eis] forgiveness of sins.

LUK 24:47 and that repentance **for** [eis] forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

- d. These Jews who now believed in Christ were commanded to repent and be baptized that their sins might be forgiven.
  - e. Peter is not talking about something that had already occurred, but instructed them on what to do to receive the forgiveness of their sins.
7. We learn that 3,000 were baptized that day. (Acts 2:41).
  8. Just prior to Luke recording the baptism of these 3,000 persons, he gave this exhortation. (Acts 2:40).  
ACT 2:40 And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation!"
  9. The KJV and ASV translate this verse “save yourselves” rather than “be saved” as we find in the New King James Version and New American Standard Version.
  10. It is vital that we carefully study this verse because there is a big difference between these words.

### **Correct Translation Of The Verse**

1. The translation of the KJV and ASV is misleading and suggests that a sinner can save himself.
2. This is not what the Holy Spirit spoke through Peter, but rather the Holy Spirit speaking through Peter commanded the multitude to “be saved from this perverse generation.”
  - a. The Greek is “sothete” [**soh** thay teh] meaning “be saved”.
  - b. “skolia” [skah **lee** ah] means “corrupt, perverse, crooked.”
3. Affirming that sinners can save themselves would mean the death of Jesus was vain [useless].
  - a. It was vain for Jesus to die on the cross for our sins if we can save ourselves.
  - b. God would not have allowed His precious Son to die such a cruel and painful death if man could be saved on his

own.

4. Race, education, money morality, good works, etc. do not merit salvation.

a. Cornelius was an outstanding man (Acts 10:1-5), but he was a lost man and needed to hear words by which he could be saved. (Acts 11:12-14).

b. He was commanded to be baptized. (Acts 10:48).

ACT 10:48 And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay on for a few days.

1) These first Gentiles converts are required to do what Peter commanded the Jews to do on Pentecost. (Acts 2:38).

2) The wording is slightly different, but the meaning is the same.

3) It is clear from the account that they had come to believe in Jesus (Acts 10:43), and Acts 11:18 that they were also required to repent.

ACT 11:18 And when they heard this, they quieted down, and glorified God, saying, "Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life."

4) A study of Acts 10 and 11 reveals they were required to believe, repent and be baptized. (Acts 10:43; 11:18; 10:48).

5) Peter clearly affirmed the necessity of baptism in 1 Peter 3:21.

1PE 3:21 And corresponding to that, baptism now saves you-- not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience-- through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

c. Holy Spirit baptism did not save him and his family, but showed that Gentiles could be saved. (Acts 11:15-17).

ACT 11:15 "And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, just as He did upon us at the beginning.

ACT 11:16 "And I remembered the word of the Lord, how He used to say, 'John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'

ACT 11:17 "If God therefore gave to them the same gift as He gave to us also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?"

## **The Truth**

1. The truth is that man cannot save himself.

a. He is lost because of his sins. (Rom. 3:10-23).

b. No action or actions on the part of man, apart from God's grace, could change this fact.

c. Only that grace of God could make salvation possible to man.

d. Because of God's undeserved love, man can be saved.

2. It is God who does the saving through the blood of His precious Son - Jesus Christ. (Eph. 1:7). See Rev. 1:5.

EPH 1:7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace,

3. **This does not mean that man is not required to do anything to be saved by God's grace.**
4. God requires men to do certain things to receive His unmerited favor.
  - a. The farmer must plow and plant, but it is God who gives the increase.
  - b. Jesus required us to ask to receive God's blessing. (Matt. 6:11; 7:7-11). See Jas. 4:2, 3.
  - c. Noah was commanded to build an ark for he and his family (Gen. 6:14; 1 Pet. 3:20), but the ark did not save them from the flood.
    - 1) His salvation was by the favor of God.
    - 2) He and his family would have drown, with the rest of mankind ,if he did not do what God required him to do.
  - d. The Bible tells us that Hagar and Ishmael were wandering in the desert of Beersheba and needed water for survival.
    - 1) Hagar "lifted up her voice and wept." (Gen. 21:16).
    - 2) God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water, and she went and filled the skin with water and gave her son a drink. (Gen. 21:19).
    - 3) Hagar and her son contributed nothing in their rescue. They were saved by the Lord, but Hagar had to draw from the well. Without drawing the water she and her son would have died of thirst.
  - e. Jesus told the blind man to go and wash his eyes in the pool of Siloam. (Jn. 9:7).

JOH 9:7 and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated, Sent). And so he went away and washed, and came back seeing.

- 1) It was by the mercy of God that the blind man, who had been blind from birth, received his sight. (Jn. 9:1).
- 2) He did not earn his healing, but if he failed to obey Jesus he would have remained blind.
- 3) God healed him because he had enough faith to do what Jesus commanded him to do.

## **Baptism**

1. Baptism [immersion] does not earn a person salvation.
2. One could be baptized a thousand times and that act alone would not wash away a single sin.
3. God has required, however, that we must be baptized for Him to wash away our sins. (Acts 2:38; 22:16).
4. Peter taught it is necessary for salvation. (1 Pet. 3:21).

1PE 3:21 And corresponding to that, baptism now saves you-- not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience-- through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

5. Paul taught this is how we “put on Christ.” (Gal. 3:26, 27).

6. Jesus and Paul emphasized baptism is essential. (Jn. 3:5; Tit. 3:5).

JOH 3:5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

TIT 3:5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,

### **Works of Merit Versus Works of Faith**

1. Human works contribute nothing to salvation (Rom. 4:4-5; Eph. 2:8, 9; Tit. 3:5), but there is no salvation without works of faith. (Jn. 6:29; Gal. 5:6; Phil. 2:12; 1 Thess. 1:3; Jas. 2:17, 24).

JOH 6:29 Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."

GAL 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.

PHI 2:12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling;

1TH 1:3 constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father,

JAM 2:17 Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.

JAM 2:24 You see that a man is justified by works, and not by faith alone.

2. Commandment keeping contributes nothing to salvation, but there is no salvation without it. (1 Jn. 2:4; Rev. 22:14, KJV).

3. Obedience contributes nothing to salvation, but there is no salvation without it. (Matt. 7:21; Rom. 1:5; Heb. 5:9; 1 Jn. 2:3-5). See also Lk. 6:46; Jn. 14:15; 2 Thess. 1:8, 9.

4. Faith contributes nothing to salvation, but there is no salvation without it. (Mk. 16:16; Jn. 3:36; 8:24; Heb. 11:6).

a. One does not earn his salvation by believing though faith is essential to salvation and it is “the work of God.” (Jn. 6:29).

JOH 6:29 Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."

b. Believing is an unmerited condition of salvation.

5. Repentance contributes nothing to salvation, but there is no salvation without it. (Lk. 13:3, 5; Acts 3:19; 17:30, 31).

6. The confession contributes nothing to salvation, but there is no salvation without it (Matt. 10:32,33; Mk 8:38; Rom. 10:9,10;14:11).

7. Baptism contributes nothing to salvation, but there is no salvation without it. (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21; Gal. 3:26, 27).

## Conclusion.

1. We should all keep in minds these words entitled “Jesus Paid It All.”

I hear the Savior say,  
“Thy strength indeed is small;  
Child of weakness, watch and pray,  
Find in me thine all in all.”  
Jesus paid it all,  
All to Him I owe;  
Sin had left a crimson stain,  
He washed it white as snow.  
(Elvina M. Hall, 1865).

2. Faith, repentance, confess, baptism [none of these things] earn us salvation, but they are required responses to God’s grace.
3. It is by the grace of God. (Eph. 2:8, 9; Rom. 6:23; 11:6).

EPH 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;  
EPH 2:9 not as a result of works, that no one should boast.

ROM 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.  
ROM 11:6 But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works [of merit], otherwise grace is no longer grace.

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