

## **What Must I Do To Be Saved?**

*by Dennis Lange*

Because men have sinned in breaking the law of God, they face punishment for those sins. "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom.6:23) and "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom.3:23). Whether we know much about the Bible or not, all of us have done something that we knew was wrong. That's sin.

Jesus bore your sins and mine upon the cross, taking our punishment upon Himself. He didn't have to; He did it out of love. "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). Just before He died upon the cross, He said, "It is finished" (John 19:30). His part, dying for us, was complete. Now, men must respond in order to receive the forgiveness of sins that His death provides.

"What must I do to be saved?" is one of the most important questions a person can ever ask. And, of course, the correct answer is of utmost importance. God is the one whose laws we have broken and it is God who has determined what men must do to receive the blessings of Christ.

After His resurrection, Jesus gave a mission to His disciples. He told them to go into all the world and preach the gospel (Matt.28:19). "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned" (Mark 16:16). The first step in carrying out this "Great Commission" was to be in Jerusalem (Luke 24:47). In that city, just as Jesus instructed, the apostle Peter preached the first gospel message. It was the day of Pentecost, one of the Jewish feast days, and the events and the message are recorded in Acts 2.

The apostles were together in one place and a sound like a violent rushing wind filled the whole house where they were (v.1,2). Tongues like fire appeared above their heads and they began to speak in other languages (v.3,4). Jews from many nations, gathered in Jerusalem for the holy day, heard the noise and came to where the apostles were (v.5,6) They were amazed when they heard the apostles speaking in their own languages (v.7-12). Peter stood and explained.

He said that what was taking place had been prophesied by Joel. He then began to tell about Jesus, that He was the Messiah promised by God, that He had been crucified, buried, and raised from the dead. He gave proof from the Old Testament scriptures and concluded by saying that they had killed the one whom God had made Lord and Christ (v.36). Because of their prior knowledge of what Jesus had done, and because of the miraculous things that had happened that day, they believed and cried out, "Brethren, what shall we do?" (v.37).

Peter answered, "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." (v.38) They had believed, but were not yet saved. They were commanded to repent. Repent means to change one's mind about sin, self, and the world, and turn instead to God. It is a change of mind resulting in a change of life. One turns away from doing what one pleases and turns to God and becomes His servant, obeying Him.

Peter also commanded them to be baptized for the forgiveness of sins. They were to be immersed in water in order to be forgiven by the blood of Jesus. Saul of Tarsus (who became the apostle Paul) was likewise commanded, "And now, why do you delay? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name." (Acts 22:16). The command by Peter on Pentecost, as he was being directly guided by God, is the command for the whole world, the only way that men may be saved.

That's why the eunuch, after Philip preached Jesus to him in Acts 8, said, "'Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?" (v.36). The eunuch had not even said that he believed in Jesus so Philip asked to make sure. The eunuch confessed his belief in Jesus, a necessary step that lets the baptizer know the individual can be baptized. Paul wrote, "that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation." (Rom.10:9,10).

Jesus had said to Nicodemus, "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." (John 3:5). It is in baptism that one is born of water and the Spirit. One is dead in sin when he comes to be baptized. He is buried in the waters of baptism (Rom.6:4; Col.2:11,12). And from baptism, he is raised up to walk in newness of life (Rom.6:4). Dead before; new afterwards – born again of water and the Spirit.

If you have decided to turn away from sin to become a servant of God, believing with all your heart, I would suggest that you read "Counting the Cost" and then contact us.

May God richly bless you.

## **What Must One Do To Be Saved?**

- Hear the gospel – "faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ" (Rom.10:17; also v.14)
- Believe – "Unless you believe that I am He, you shall die in your sins" (John 8:24)
- Repent – "Repent and be converted that your sins may be blotted out..." (Acts 3:19)
- Confess Jesus as Lord – "if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved" (Rom.10:9)
- Be baptized – "be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins..." (Acts 2:38; 22:16; I Pet.3:21)