

What Does the Bible Say About Salvation?

There is no more important question a person can ask than the one the jailer at Philippi asked Paul, *"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"* ([Acts 16:30](#)). Everything else in this life is small beside it, because everything else ends, and the soul does not. The good news is that God has answered the question plainly. He has not hidden salvation away or left us to guess at it. He has told us what He has done to save us, and what He asks of us to receive it. Let us take it in order.

What We Are Saved From

Before we can prize salvation, we have to see what we are saved from. The Bible says *"all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"* ([Romans 3:23](#)), and that sin has a wage. *"For the wages of sin is death"* ([Romans 6:23](#)). Our sins have *"separated between you and your God"* ([Isaiah 59:2](#)), and they leave us under His judgment. This is not a small predicament we can fix on our own. It is a debt we cannot pay and a stain we cannot wash out. That is the trouble salvation answers.

Salvation Is God's Gift, Not Our Earning

We do not save ourselves, and we never could. Salvation is the gift of God, given out of His mercy and bought by the blood of His Son. *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast"* ([Ephesians 2:8-9](#)). It is *"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy"* ([Titus 3:5](#)) that He saves us. We have redemption *"through his blood, the forgiveness of sins"* ([Ephesians 1:7](#)). No one will stand in heaven boasting that he earned his place. We are saved because God was good, not because we were.

But It Is Received on God's Terms

That salvation is a gift does not mean nothing is asked of us. A gift must still be received, and God has said how. His grace does not cancel His commands. Jesus *"became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him"* ([Hebrews 5:9](#)). And lest anyone think faith alone is enough, with no obedience joined to it, James wrote, *"by works a man is justified, and not by faith only"* ([James 2:24](#)). The hand that receives the gift is a faith that obeys.

What God Asks of Us

What, then, must a person do? The New Testament is plain, and it speaks with one voice from one end to the other. He must hear the gospel, for *"faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"* ([Romans 10:17](#)). He must believe it, for Jesus said, *"if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins"* ([John 8:24](#)). He must repent of his sins, for God *"now commandeth all men every where to repent"* ([Acts 17:30](#)). He must confess his faith, for *"with the mouth confession is made unto salvation"* ([Romans 10:10](#)). And he must be baptized, for Peter said, *"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins"* ([Acts 2:38](#)), and Saul was told to *"arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins"* ([Acts 22:16](#)). At that point the Lord adds the saved to His church ([Acts 2:47](#)). This is not a ladder we climb to earn heaven. It is simply how God has said the gift is received.

Salvation Is Offered to All

This salvation is not held back from anyone who will have it. God *"will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth"* ([1 Timothy 2:4](#)), and the grace that brings it *"hath appeared to all men"* ([Titus 2:11](#)). The last invitation in the Bible leaves no one out, *"And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely"* ([Revelation 22:17](#)). It does not say whosoever is good enough, or whosoever has never sinned greatly, or whosoever comes from the right family. It says whosoever will. The door is as wide as the human race, and the only people shut out are those who shut themselves out by refusing to come.

Saved to Walk Faithfully

Salvation is not a card filed away and forgotten. The saved are called to keep walking with God. *"if we walk in the light, as he is in the light... the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin"* ([1 John 1:7](#)). The Lord told the church at Smyrna, *"be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life"* ([Revelation 2:10](#)). A man can turn back and be lost again, for Paul warned some they were *"fallen from grace"* ([Galatians 5:4](#)). We are not saved by our walking, but the saved do walk, and they keep walking to the end.

So the jailer's question still hangs over every soul. What must I do to be saved? God has answered it. The blood has been shed, the terms are plain, and the door stands open. The only thing left undone is your obedience. *"now why tarriest thou?"* ([Acts 22:16](#)).

Every Scripture reference in this study links to the King James Version. Open it and read for yourself.