

## What did they Do to be Saved? – First Peter 1:22

### I. Introduction:

- A. Paul and Silas were directed by the Holy Spirit to sail across the northern tip of the Aegean Sea from Troas to Philippi.
1. Their lives then intersected with the life of Lydia, who was working there, but who actually lived in Thyatira.
  2. She responded positively to their presentation of the gospel because the Lord sovereignly opened her heart. She believed the truth and was baptized as a testimony of her faith in Christ.
  3. As the evangelists continued to minister in Philippi, they were used by God to deliver a poor slave girl from a demon who controlled her.
  4. This was considered a violation of the rights of her owners, so Paul and Silas were beaten and cast into prison.
  5. **Acts 16:25** says, *“And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.”*
    - a. *And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one’s bands were loosed.*
    - b. *And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.*
    - c. *But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.*
    - d. *Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas,*
    - e. *And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?*
    - f. *And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.”*
- B. Obviously, there are some background details to this event which the Holy Spirit has not shared with.
1. The man must have been told about salvation from sin and about his need of deliverance.
    - a. And he must have been introduced to the Lord Jesus Christ in some fashion.
    - b. Maybe it was when he was leading the preachers to their cells, or maybe it was by listening to their voices as they sang, and praised God while in their pain, or as they testified to other prisoners.
  2. After nearly losing his life in the earthquake that prison warden brought the prisoners out and said, *“Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”*
  3. And the reply was simply, *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”*
  4. He apparently already appeared broken over his sin, so essentially Paul said, *“Trust what Christ Jesus did on the cross, and thou shalt be saved.”*
  5. But **what if** Paul had said, *“Obey the Lord”* or *“obey the gospel?”*
- C. Please turn to **Luke 13:1** where we read: *“There were present at that season some that told (Jesus) of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.”*
1. This is probably referring to Judas of Galilee, who was inciting rebellion against Rome.
  2. The famous Rabbi Gamaliel referred to this in **Acts 5**. It was a well-known recent event.
  3. Pilate, the Roman governor, waited for Judas and his followers to come to Jerusalem for the Passover, at which time he had soldiers slaughter them all.
  4. *“And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that **these** Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things?*
    - a. *I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*
    - b. *Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?*
    - c. *I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”*
- D. In keeping with the preaching of John the Baptist and His own ministry, Jesus told those people that unless they repented of their sins before God they would die, whether by accident, murder, execution or old age.
1. In other words, *“If you want to be saved and prepared for the Kingdom of God, you must repent.”*
  2. But what if the Lord then added: *“Obey me,”* or *“obey what I am telling you?”*

- E. In **John 3**, a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, came to Jesus by night implying that he wanted a message from the Lord. *“Instruct me. Astound me.”*
1. He said, *“We know that thou art a teacher come from God.”*
  2. Jesus did astound him, when He said, *“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God... Ye must be born again.”*
  3. Why didn't the Lord tell the man, *“Obey God,”* or *“obey the gospel?”*
- F. Nicodemus, the Galileans and the Philippian jailor all needed to be delivered from the punishment of their sins.
1. In the language of the Bible, they needed to be *“saved.”*
    - a. They needed to be **reconciled** to God. They needed to be **regenerated** – lifted out of spiritual death.
  2. One heard, *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.”*
  3. The Galileans heard *“Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”*
  4. And Nicodemus was told that he had to be born again, and in the context Christ added:
    - a. *“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up;*
    - b. *That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.”*
  5. Not one of these people was told to **obey** any rules and regulations or of the Ten Commandments.
  6. *“What must they do to be saved?”*
  7. What they were told to do was **believe, repent** and be **born again**.
  8. We could pull up other examples of the same sort of questions and answers, but let's return to our text.
- G. Peter was writing to people who **formerly** were like Nicodemus, the Philippian jailor and those Galileans.
1. But they **had been** *“born again... not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God.”*
  2. They **had been** *“redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”*
  3. Because they had been chosen of God (**verse 2**), they had been sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ, and were sanctified in God's holy sight.
- H. Now, in **verse 22**, looking back at their salvation from the position of saints of God, Peter speaks of the way in which they were saved – but in an entirely differently way.
1. *“You purified your souls by following the Holy Spirit into obeying the truth.”*
  2. This is not the most evangelical answer to: *“What must I do to be saved?”*
  3. This requires some explanation, because of all the confusing ways in which proud sinners think they can earn God's salvation.
  4. But looking back and using different terminology, Peter pointed to what these Christians did to be saved.
  5. *“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit...”*
- I. For the sake of our lesson, let's simply break the statement into its major components.

## II. Let's begin with Peter's reference to the SOULS of these believers.

- A. Whatever else is contained in this statement it needs to be understood that we are **not talking** about these people in some sort of **physical way**.
1. This is not speaking of any kind of purifying bath, shower or baptism.
  2. As much as people want to spiritualize the service of the priests in the Old Testament tabernacle, Peter is not talking about washing at the brazen laver.
  3. Nor is he referring to that evening in the upper room when the Lord Jesus came to wash Peter's feet.
  4. This is not about the Pharisee's arguments with Christ about washing before meals.
  5. This has nothing to do with hands, feet or faces. He specifically speaks of their **souls**.
- B. How is it that religious people can equate baptism of the body with washing away the sins of the soul?
1. I'm not trying to appear superior to anyone, because like most of you, I was once one of those religious

people.

2. Baptismal salvation is a trap which Satan has laid for the damnation of souls.
  3. Peter is not talking about baptism nor is he speaking about reforming people's outward lives.
    - a. This is not about giving up tobacco, alcohol, pornography and pot.
    - b. He isn't praising them for cleaning up their foul language and giving up their dirty jokes.
    - c. It's not to say they didn't make these amends to their lives, but this is not Peter's subject.
  4. And it's not about first century psychiatrists performing their witchcraft to cleanse people's psyches and psychoses.
- C. Peter is speaking about **souls** – that very real part of us which will pass through death into the life to come.
1. We **are** all **eternal souls**, residing in temporary, physical and dying bodies.
  2. Your spirit is another aspect of who you are, but if you have not been born again, your spirit is dead and is not a part of the equation. Your dead spirit is why, *"Ye must be born again."*
  3. You will, sooner than you like, shed your physical body, but your soul will enter either Heaven or Hell, because your soul is eternal.

### III. Peter says that the souls of these believers in Pontus and Galatia had been **PURIFIED**.

#### A. *"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit..."*

1. Usually when the Greek word *"purified"* is used it is speaking of something **religious** and **ceremonial**.
2. **John 11:55** – *"The Jews' passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves."*
3. And when Paul went to Jerusalem with the love offerings of the saints, the leaders of the church asked him, as a Hebrew Christian, to purify himself as a sign to the Jewish saints that he was not opposed to them.

#### B. There was a Jewish ceremonial purification which we can see in the Old Testament.

1. But the purification to which Peter refers is not in any way ceremonial.
2. His readers were a mix of Jews and Gentiles; former worshipers of Jehovah and worshipers of a wide variety of false gods.
3. Some of them wouldn't have understood any reference to Old Testament purification.
4. And **Paul**, who first evangelized those provinces, went out of his way to avoid referring to Jewish ceremonialism.
5. The **Book of Galatians** shows us that those people were plagued by Judaisers, trying to turn Gentiles into Jews. Paul would have none of that, and certainly Peter was not referring to it either.

#### C. This purification speaks of the salvation of God's elect.

1. The quarrel which Paul had with those Judaisers eventually took him to Jerusalem from where many of them had come.
2. Please turn to **Acts 15** and notice the relationship between Paul, Peter and those false teachers.
  - a. **Verse 5:** *"There rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise (the Gentiles), and to command them to keep the law of Moses.*
  - b. *And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.*
  - c. *And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.*
  - d. *And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.*
  - e. *Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?*
  - f. *But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they."*
3. There was no doubt in Peter's mind that salvation is by the grace of God through the Lord Jesus Christ.
4. And he also clearly says, the hearts of both Jews and Gentiles are *"purified by faith,"* referring to faith in

completed work of Christ on the Cross.

- D. Peter didn't change his mind in the years between **Acts 15** and the writing of his **First Epistle**.
1. The souls of these people had been purified by the grace of Almighty God.
  2. That may not have been the way he would have preached salvation to a bunch of lost people.
  3. But he could say such thing to these saints because with their regenerated hearts and enlightened minds, they understood.

#### IV. Their souls had been purified through **OBEDIENCE** to the truth.

- A. What does he mean by that?
1. When the Lord Jesus told His Galilean visitors in **Luke 13** that they needed to repent or perish, I hope that some of them were moved by the Holy Spirit to repent; to turn their backs on sin to face the Lord.
  2. I hope that some of them **obeyed** what they were told.
  3. And when Nicodemus was told that he needed to be born again, it appears that he received the Lord's instruction, and he was born again. He too **obeyed** the Lord's instructions and command.
  4. When the Philippian jailer asked *"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"*
    - a. Paul and Silas exhorted him to *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved..."*
    - b. There is a sense in which that man **obeyed** Paul's instructions, trusting Christ.
- B. What is obedience?
1. Webster defines it as: *"compliance with a command, prohibition or known law and rule of duty."*
    - a. *The performance of what is required or enjoined by authority...*
    - b. *To constitute obedience the act must be in submission to authority...*
    - c. *Obedience is not synonymous with obsequiousness (obedience as a slave)...*
    - d. *And yet obedience may be voluntary or involuntary.*
    - e. *Voluntary obedience alone is acceptable to God."*
  2. What these people had done – these who were now children of God – was to respond to the leadership of the Holy Spirit in believing on Christ while turning from their sins.
  3. They willingly and joyfully obeyed the irresistible leadership of the Lord.
- C. I know that most gospel preachers usually shy away from speaking of *"obedience"* when presenting the gospel, but the Bible is not so reticent.
1. When the church in Jerusalem was exploding in growth and conversions, **Acts 6:7** says,
    - a. *"And the word God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priest were obedient to the faith."*
    - b. Those priests responded to the gospel message by trusting the message and the sacrifice of Christ.
  2. In **Romans 1**, Paul says that God had called him into the gospel ministry so that people from all nations might be *"obedient to the faith."*
  3. In the next chapter, in speaking about people who were stubborn and obstinate, he says, "unto them that are contentious, and *'do not obey the truth,'* judgment will fall, including tribulation and anguish."
  4. The author of **Hebrews**, in speaking about Christ says, *"and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."*
    - a. That statement would be contrary to dozens and dozens of other scriptures, if **Hebrews** was talking about obedience to the Ten Commandments or any of the statutes of Israel.
    - b. But it is talking about **obedience** to the **truth**; obedience **by faith**.
- D. Peter says, *"seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit..."*
1. In a subsequent lesson or two, we will answer Pilate's question: *"What is truth?"*
  2. At this point all we need to do is continue reading.
    - a. *"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever..."*

*b. The word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."*

3. The truth which must be obeyed for the purification of our souls is the gospel of Christ which we find in the pages of the Word of God, the Bible.
  4. It is in the Bible where we read, *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."*
    - a. It is in the **Gospel of Luke** where we hear the Lord Jesus say, *"Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."*
    - b. It is in God's Word where we hear the Holy Spirit tell us, *"Ye must be born again."*
- E. And from where does the wisdom, the ability, and the strength to obey the truth originate?
1. Peter tells us: It comes through the ministry of the Spirit of God within us.
    - a. The ability to obey this command of God can't be found in us, because of the effects of sin's mighty curse.
    - b. It is the Holy Spirit who enables us.
  2. Without getting into an entirely different message, the truth teaches us – the Bible tells us – that we are all born spiritually dead.
  3. Our eternal souls temporarily reside in physical bodies, but our eternal spirits are dead because of sin.
  4. Therefore, the only way we can obey the truth is through the regenerating operation of the Holy Spirit.
  5. When the Spirit *"quickens"* sinners with spiritual life, they willingly and joyfully obey the precepts of the gospel by repenting before God and putting their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- F. Does this first letter of Peter belong to you?
1. Have you purified your soul in obeying the truth through the Spirit?
  2. Would Peter look at you and say, *"seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit... love one another with a pure heart fervently?"*