

## Th122 Foundation Doctrines

### *Lesson Th122 - 10 Saved by Faith*

People in the world today practice many religions. Each religion requires followers to perform certain tasks to achieve either right standing with their deity or reach a desired state of being. The followers of Judaism must obey the laws in the Old Testament in order to be blessed by God. The followers of Islam must perform the five pillars of Islam to have any hope of right standing with Allah. Hinduism is a road or path to liberation. In Buddhism we find the eight-fold path for correct living with the goal of individual enlightenment. In all of these religions the works of the individual follower determine his or her own success.

Christianity is the one great exception. The Christian's right standing with God is not based upon the individual's works. Instead it is based upon the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul made this statement in a letter he wrote to the church in Ephesus: "It is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast" (Eph 2:8-9).

To us, salvation is free. We cannot buy it, work for it, travel a path to it, or achieve it. Salvation is a free gift from God that was purchased by the death of Jesus. There is only one requirement for receiving God's salvation. We must believe in the Lord Jesus. The apostle Paul made this important statement in a letter he wrote to the church in Rome. "If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved" (Rom 10:9-10).

The apostle Paul and his ministry partner, Silas, were on a missionary trip to the land of Macedonia. It is located just north of Greece. They had reached the city of Philippi and were having some success in preaching the gospel. Each day Paul and Silas, along with some fellow believers, would go to a place of prayer. Nearby was a female slave who was demon possessed. Many thought she could predict the future. She met the disciples on their way to pray and began to follow them, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved" (Acts 16:16-17).

Each day as they went to pray, this woman would follow them, shouting as they walked. Finally Paul became so annoyed with this that he turned around and said to the demonic spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!" At that very moment the spirit left her and she was free.

Now most people would rejoice that a person had been delivered from demonic possession. But the female slave's owners became very angry because she could no longer make money for them by foretelling things. Enraged, they grabbed Paul and Silas and dragged them before the city's magistrates. A big commotion took place as a crowd gathered and joined in the attack against them. The magistrates, trying to calm the mob, had Paul and Silas beaten with rods and thrown into prison. They commanded the jailer to guard them carefully. The jailer did not need any extra motivation for keeping a close watch over his prisoners. He understood that

he would be held responsible if anyone escaped. He could be put into prison himself or put to death. So the jailer placed Paul and Silas in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God. The other prisoners were listening quietly. Suddenly there was a violent earthquake. The prison was shaken so violently that the prison doors swung open. Even the chains that held the prisoners came loose. The sleeping jailer was suddenly wide awake. When he opened his eyes and saw the prison doors open, he was afraid. He thought surely everyone had escaped. Staggering to his feet, he drew his sword. He decided it would be better to kill himself than to suffer at the hands of the magistrates and live the rest of his life in prison. As he prepared to thrust his sword through his own belly, he heard a voice calling to him from within the prison. "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!" Paul called out.

The jailer quickly called for a light and found Paul and Silas. He brought them out of the prison and into his quarters. "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" he asked.

Isn't it interesting that the prison guard thought that he had to **do** something to be saved. But Paul's answer did not require any great deed, but rather simply asked him to believe. Paul told him: "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household." Then they spoke the Word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. The jailer took them and washed their wounds. Then immediately he and his entire household were baptized. They were filled with joy because they had come to believe in God (Acts 16:18-31).

This story is **important** because it demonstrates the powerful truth that salvation is a gift. The only requirement for a person to receive this gift is for them to believe, that is, to have faith.

The **main truth** of this lesson is that no amount of good works can earn a person's salvation. It is by grace we are saved, through faith.

Let's **review** what we have discovered in this lesson:

1. What is a Christian's right standing with God based on? [Pause]  
A. If you said it is based upon the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, you answered correctly.
2. What were Paul and Silas doing in prison at midnight? [Pause]  
A. If you answered, "They were praying and singing hymns to God," you are correct.
3. What was the one requirement for the jailer, in order that he might be saved? [Pause]  
A. If you answered that he had to believe in the Lord Jesus to be saved, then you are right.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to watch this lesson at least three times until you can retell the story of Paul and Silas in prison. The statements of Paul in regard to salvation are crucial for every believer to memorize. Thus an additional part of your assignment is to memorize this verse from the Bible: "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and

this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast" Ephesians chapter 2, verses 8 and 9.

Here is the verse again: "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith (pause) and this not from yourselves, (pause) it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast."

Here is the verse one last time: "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith (pause) and this not from yourselves, (pause) it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast."