



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

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See also ["Not By Works."](#)

The "**keeper of the prison**" asked this question, and Paul and Silas answered,

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household. (Acts 16:31)

This is what it takes to be saved, faith in the Son of God (John 3:16-18, 36; Romans 5:1). Scripture says that "**all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God**" (Romans 3:23), and "**there is none righteous, no, not one**" (Romans 3:10). Isaiah says, "**All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way;**" (Isaiah 53:6) and "**You are indeed angry, for we have sinned - in these ways we continue; and we need to be saved**" (Isaiah 64:5).

Everyone needs to be saved because, "**there is none who does good, no, not one**" (Romans 3:12), and because God "**has appointed a day on which He will judge the world**" (Acts 17:31). When God judges the world, all who have *not* been saved will be judged according to their deeds (Romans 2:6) and cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:11-15). They will be in endless torment for all eternity (e.g. Revelation 20:10; 14:11; Isaiah 66:24; Mark 9:43-48). Every one indeed needs to be saved!

But, not everyone will be saved. As Romans 9 says,

Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel: "Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, the remnant will be saved. For He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness, because the Lord will make a short work upon the earth." (Romans 9:27-28)

And the same is true, not only of Israel, but of all mankind.

Then one said to Him, "Lord, are there few who are saved?" And He said to them, "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able." (Luke 13:23-24)

Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. (Matthew 7:13-14; see also Matthew 7:21-23)

Typically, [false Christians, people who are on this broad way](#) ("**broad is the way**"), are led astray regarding what it takes to be saved. They are given a perverted answer to the above question, "**What must I do to be saved?**" (e.g. see our report on [Charles Stanley](#)). But, it is all very stealthful (2 Peter 2:1) and deceptive. The answer given may be in word identical to that found in Acts 16:31, but what is meant by it is typically vastly different than what it is in truth.

I. True Faith

Acts 16:31 says, "**Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ . . .**" What is it to believe on Christ? It is to trust Him. It is to have faith in Him. It is to hope in Him. As Psalm 2:12 says, "**Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.**" and as Paul preached, "**repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ**" (Acts 20:21); and as 1 Peter 3:15 says, "**But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, . . .**"

True faith is a trust, hope and reliance upon God (on Christ). It is trusting and hoping in His mercy (Psalm 52:8; 147:11) realizing

your "**goodness is nothing apart from**" Him (Psalm 16:1; Isaiah 57:15; 66:2; Matthew 5:3). Those with true faith enter a "rest" (Hebrews 4) that rests their "**hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought [to them] at the revelation of Jesus Christ**" (1 Peter 1:13) trusting not in their own righteousness (Titus 3:5), but in the righteousness of God that comes through faith in Christ (Philippians 3:9; Romans 3:22).

True faith is not only trusting and hoping in the mercy and righteousness of God, but it is relying upon Him *in everything* (Proverbs 3:5-6; 1 Thessalonians 5:18), *for everything* (Isaiah 50:10; Ephesians 5:20), and *at all times* (Psalm 62:8). As Psalm 40:4 says, "**Blessed is that man who makes the Lord his trust.**"

How then does this faith in Christ manifest itself? It manifests itself through good works (i.e. righteous living). As James says,

What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe-and tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God. You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. (James 2:14-26)

The above passage reveals that you are a "**foolish man**" (verse 20) if you think that a person can have faith in God and not at the same time have godly living (good works, 1 Corinthians 6:9; Titus 2:11-14; Ephesians 2:10). True belief has a righteous effect on a person's life, as Romans 10:10 says, "**For with the heart one believes unto righteousness.**" The "**righteousness of God**" that comes "**through faith in Jesus Christ**" is "**to all and on all who believe**" (Romans 3:22). In other words, God's righteousness is upon those who believe, so therefore they live righteous lives.

This is why those who do respond to Christ in faith, respond in obedience to His call to be baptized (Mark 15:16). Those in Acts 16:30-34 were immediately immersed in Christ (Acts 16:33). Peter preached in Acts 2:38,

Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Those who refuse to obey God in this command prove themselves to be still in rebellion against God (Proverbs 17:11; 2 Thessalonians 1:8) and receive no remission of sins (Acts 2:38). It is not that water, in and of itself, saves anyone (1 Peter 3:21), but it is baptism (immersion) into Christ, an appeal to God for a good conscience, is what saves the soul (1 Peter 3:21 NAS); and this comes only through faith (Hebrews 11:6).

II. The True "Lord Jesus Christ"

This faith must be in "**the Lord Jesus Christ**" (Acts 16:31), that is, the *true* Jesus, not the "**Jesus who is called Justus**" (Colossians 4:11) or any other "Jesus." In 2 Corinthians 11:4 Paul spoke of the reality of "another Jesus." [Mormonism](#), [Jehovah's Witness](#), [Catholicism](#), Buddhism, Hinduism, Atheism, [the present day false Christianity that is so prevalent](#) (2 Timothy 3:1-5; 4:3-4; 2 Peter 2:1), and any other false religion or philosophy, all have ideas of a "Jesus Christ" but it is not in accordance with truth. If a person believes in a "Jesus" but it is not the Lord Jesus Christ of the Bible, they are not saved (John 14:6; Acts 4:12).

The true Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God (John 10:36) which means He is equal with God (John 5:18). It also means He *is* God (Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1; 18; Philippians 2:6; Titus 2:13; 1 John 2:23; 5:20). The true Lord Jesus is also a man (1 Timothy 2:5; Luke 24:39), [one of two men](#) (John 8:17-18). Therefore, He is both God and man (Colossians 2:9; 2 John 7).

The true Lord Jesus is also the truth (John 14:6) and the wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1:24, 30; Luke 11:49; Matthew 23:34), and the

Word of God (the "Logos", John 1:1, 14; Revelation 19:13; Luke 5:1; 8:11, 21; 11:28; John 8:55; 17:14, 17; etc., **1 Peter 1:23-25** has both "logos" and "rhama" for the word of God). Jesus is God, and Jesus is the Word of God, therefore the Word of God is God (John 1:1). As the Word of God says,

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account. (Hebrews 4:12-13)

As the above Scripture says, there is no creature hidden from the sight of the word of God. All things are naked and open to the eyes of the word of God, because the word of God *is* God. Galatians 3:8 also illustrates that the word of God (i.e. Scripture) is God Himself.

And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed." (Galatians 3:8; see also Genesis 12:3; 18:18; 22:18)

Here Scripture is described as "**foreseeing**" and preaching. The word of God is indeed alive (1 Peter 1:23).

Therefore, since the Lord Jesus is the Word of God, Scripture, those who believe in Him, believe in the Scriptures (the Holy Bible), since that is who He is. Therefore, to say, "**Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ**" (Acts 16:31) this is the same as saying "believe on the word of God," or "believe what God says." Just as Jesus saves (Matthew 1:21), so does the word of God save (Matthew 4:4; James 1:21; 1 Peter 1:22-23). They are one and the same.

Thus, salvation comes through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God, i.e. what God says. Abraham illustrates this:

For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." (Romans 4:3)

Abraham was "**accounted**" righteous (i.e. justified, Romans 4:5) by God. He was saved. Why? Because He believed God. He believed what God said.

Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." And he believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness. (Genesis 15:5-6)

Abraham believed God in the midst of what appeared to be an absolute impossibility. Abraham had no children. He was an old man, and his wife was old and barren. Yet, the Lord told him that his descendants would be as "**the stars**" in number! Abraham,

who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, "So shall your descendants be." And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. And therefore "it was accounted to him for righteousness." (Romans 4:18-22)

Why was it "**accounted to him for righteousness**"? Because he believed what God said in what appeared to be, and was, impossible to ever be true. But God "**calls those things which do not exist as though they did**" (Romans 4:17). "**For with God nothing will be impossible.**" (Luke 1:37) Therefore, Abraham believed God. Abraham believed in Christ, the Word of God. And as it was with Abraham, so it is with all those who "**are blessed with believing Abraham**" (Galatians 3:10). They are "**accounted righteous**" (i.e. saved) because they "**do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.**" (2 Corinthians 4:18). They "**walk by faith, not by sight**" (2 Corinthians 5:7). This is true faith in the true Lord Jesus Christ.

III. True Salvation

Furthermore, being "**saved**" (Acts 16:31) is not just fire insurance. True salvation is being saved from sin (Matthew 1:21), both the

power of sin in the here and now (Romans 6:14) and from the wages of sin which is eternal death (Romans 6:23; Revelation 21:8). It is also being saved from the power of Satan (Acts 26:18; Ephesians 2:1-5; Colossians 1:13).

Therefore, those who are saved are those who live godly lives and do not practice sin (John 8:31-36; 1 John 1:5-6; 2:3-5; 3:4-10). As 1 John says,

Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin. Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him. Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God. In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother. (1 John 3:4-10)

This does not mean believers are without sin (1 John 1:7-10), but they do not continue to live in any evil way. They also do not follow after lies (as a pattern of their life), but after truth, the word of God; because they believe God, follow after Him, and take heed to what He says. As Jesus said, "**He who is of God hears God's words**" (John 8:47; see also Matthew 7:21-27).

True salvation is being saved from sin and error, not only in the life to come, but in the here and now. [Those who teach otherwise](#) (1 Timothy 6:3) turn the grace of God into lewdness (Jude 4), and deny the power of godliness (2 Timothy 3:5). Because, it is lewd and foolish to teach that a person can be saved from the power of sin and Satan, yet still be caught in the trap of sin and Satan. The power of godliness is the power resident in a true believer's life to overcome sin, deceit, and Satan. "**For whatever is born of God overcomes the world**" (1 John 5:4), and "**the wicked one does not touch him.**" (1 John 5:18).

Salvation produces a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15) in which the one who believes is born again (John 3:3-6; 1 Peter 1:3), that is, born of God (John 1:12-13; 1 John 3:9; 5:4). It is a transformation from spiritual death to spiritual life (Ephesians 2:1-5).

IV. The Cost

The salvation of souls cost the Son of God His life (Luke 22:63-23:48; Romans 5:6-10; 1 Corinthians 15:3). He shed His own blood (Colossians 1:20) and "**bore our sins in His own body on the tree**" (1 Peter 2:24). "**For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**" (2 Corinthians 5:21)

Christ paid the price. Therefore, those who believe in Him are "**justified freely by His grace**" (Romans 3:24). Ephesians 2:8-9 says,

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Even the faith it takes to believe in Christ is "**the gift of God**" (Ephesians 2:8). Therefore, eternal life comes as a gift (Romans 5:15-18; 6:23), and is not something worked for or given by God by merit (Ephesians 2:1-9; Romans 4:1-5). In fact, salvation is "**not of the will of man, but of God**" (John 1:12-13). [Those who teach man chooses God based on his own free will](#), apart from God causing them to turn to Him (Proverbs 16:9; 20:24), propagate a gospel of works which is contrary to Romans 9:11-16 and Ephesians 2:1-10.

Now, since Christ paid the price, and this eternal life is a gift, and it is not based on "**works lest anyone should boast**" (Ephesians 2:9), does this mean salvation costs the believer nothing? No. In fact, being "**bought at a price**" by Christ dictates that the believer has lost everything to Christ (Philippians 3:8), even his own body.

Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again. (2 Corinthians 5:15)

Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness-" (1 Peter 2:24)

Jesus said,

If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it- lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, "This man began to build and was not able to finish." Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple. (Luke 14:26-33)

Here Jesus exhorts the multitude that was following Him (Luke 14:25) to "**count the cost**" of following Him. There is a "**cost**" to having true faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The cost is the loss of everything (Philippians 3:8; Matthew 13:44-46). As Jesus said,

Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? (Mark 8:34-36; see also Luke 9:23-25)

V. The Answer

Finally, there are *many* ways to answer the question, "**What must I do to be saved?**" This does not mean that there are many ways of salvation (John 14:6), but that Scripture answers this question in a variety of ways in which all are consistent with Acts 16:31. For example, Psalm 15 asks the same question, but with different words.

Lord, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill?

In other words, who may abide with God? Who goes to heaven? The answer?

He who walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart; he who does not backbite with his tongue, nor does evil to his neighbor, nor does he take up a reproach against his friend; in whose eyes a vile person is despised, but he honors those who fear the Lord; he who swears to his own hurt and does not change; he who does not put out his money at usury, nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things shall never be moved.

Likewise, Psalm 24:3 asks,

Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who may stand in His holy place?

The answer?

He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully. (Psalm 24:4)

This is the kind of person who goes to heaven. Of course, the New Testament concurs with this. "**The unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God**" (1 Corinthians 6:9). And, as Romans 3:22 says the "**righteousness of God**" comes through faith in Christ. Here in Psalm 24, it says that the righteousness of God comes to the one "**who has clean hands and a pure heart**" (Psalm 24:4).

He shall receive blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is Jacob, the generation of those who seek Him, who seek Your face. Selah (Psalm 24:5-6)

Isaiah 55:6-7 also gives the answer to "**What must I do to be saved?**"

Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.

This is synonymous with "**Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved**" (Acts 16:31), because a true believer will "**seek the Lord while He may be found**" and call "**upon Him while He is near.**"

Hebrews 11:6 also gives the answer to "**What must I do to be saved?**"

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

What does the above verse let us know? That God must be diligently sought after! Proverbs 2:1-5 says,

My son, if you receive my words, and treasure my commands within you, so that you incline your ear to wisdom, and apply your heart to understanding; yes, if you cry out for discernment, and lift up your voice for understanding, if you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures; then you will understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. (Proverbs 2:1-5)

The knowledge of God equals eternal life (John 17:3). Proverbs 2:1-5 mirrors Isaiah 55:6-7 in seeking wisdom. In other words, you must diligently seek wisdom in order to be saved, since the Lord *is* wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:24, 30). Those who do not seek wisdom will be damned. As Proverbs 1:32 says, "**the complacency of fools will destroy them.**"

1 Peter 3:10-12 also gives what one must do to be saved.

He who would love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking deceit. Let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.

Those who do evil go to hell (Psalm 11:6; Revelation 21:8). Therefore, we *must* refrain our tongue from evil, our lips from speaking deceit, and we *must* turn away from evil and do good. As Paul explained to King Agrippa that the Gentiles,

should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance. (Acts 26:20)

Romans 10:9-10 also answers this question.

If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Romans 10:10 says, "**with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.**" The confession that is made is "**Lord Jesus.**" In other words, submission is made to the only Potentate, King of Kings and Lord of Lords (1 Timothy 6:15). The life is no longer in rebellion against God (Colossians 1:21), and this results "**unto salvation.**"

For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. (Romans 14:7-8)

Those who do not live for God go to hell. As Romans 2:8-9 says,

those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness - indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil.

Therefore, in order to be saved, you *must* live for Christ and you *must* not live for yourself, *and* you *must* obey the truth (Romans 2:8; John 14:6). Likewise, 2 Thessalonians 2:10 also reveals what it takes to be saved. It says, "**they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.**" One must not only obey the truth, but also love it (Mark 12:30; John 14:6).

Hebrews 12:14 says, "**Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.**" If you are "**without holiness**" you will not see the Lord. In other words, your life must be holy or you will not be saved (1 Timothy 1:9; 2 Timothy 3:2; 1 Corinthians 6:9).

Matthew 6:14-15 reveals we must be forgiving.

For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (see also Matthew 18:21-35; Mark 11:25-26)

The eternal gospel reveals we must [fear God](#), worship Him, and give Him glory.

Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people— saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water." (Revelation 14:6-7)

Revelation 22:14 reveals we must "**do His commandments.**"

Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie. (Revelation 22:14-15)

Psalms 103 says likewise,

But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children's children, to such as keep His covenant, and to those who remember His commandments to do them. (Psalm 103:17-18)

Finally, you must *continue* to believe, or you'll go to hell. Jesus said, "**He who endures to the end shall be saved**" (Matthew 24:13). Hebrews says,

but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end. (Hebrews 3:6)

Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end. (Hebrews 3:12-14; see also 1 Corinthians 15:1-2 and Colossians 1:21-23)

All of these (continued faith, holiness, living for God, etc.) are good works that are resultant of true faith in Christ (James 2:14-26). Believers work out their salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12), not because they trust in their own righteousness, but because it is "**God who works in [them] both to will and to do for His good pleasure**" (Philippians 2:13). Faith and obedience go hand in hand (e.g. Hebrews 3:18-19).

What's the bottom line? You must believe God, otherwise you make Him a liar.

He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. (1 John 5:10)