

The Philippian Jailor

(Acts 16:22-40)

- A. Paul and Silas were stripped, beaten and cast in stocks into prison at Philippi without trial. Paul later described this as being "...shamefully entreated..." (**1TH 2:2**).
 - 1. Though their treatment was shameful, they had no reason to be ashamed for it. **1PE 4:16**.
 - 2. True Christianity may well mean such suffering. **PHIL 1:29; 2TI 3:12**.
- B. Instead of fretting about their treatment, Paul and Silas prayed and praised God. **v. 25 c/w JOB 35:10; PSA 42:7-8**.
- C. God honored their praises by arising for them. **v. 26 c/w 2CH 20:22**.
- D. The jailor feared for his life with good cause. **v. 27 c/w ACT 12:19**.
- E. What follows is a beautiful account of *temporal* salvation that God's elect acquire through faith. **2TI 2:10**.
 - 1. The jailor said, "...what must I DO to be saved?" (**v. 30**).
 - 2. Paul & Silas replied, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ..." (**v. 31**).
 - 3. Believing is obviously something that one does, i.e., it is work, the keeping of a commandment. **1JO 3:23**.
 - a. work: Something that is or was done; what a person does or did.
 - b. The jailor asked what to do, and he was told to believe.
 - c. Conclusion: belief is a work. c/w **HEB 4:6-11; JOH 6:28-29**.
 - d. Believing on the Lord Jesus Christ is a commandment. **1JO 3:23**.
 - (1) Belief is *counted for righteousness*; it does not make one righteous. **ROM 4:3**.
 - (2) Making the keeping of a commandment a *condition to procure* regeneration, justification, righteousness, etc. is to bind oneself to the flawless keeping of all commandments. **DEU 6:25; GAL 5:3**.
 - (3) Compliance with a commandment is a righteous act we do and regeneration unto life is not according to such work but rather God's mercy and the Holy Ghost's work of renewal. **TIT 3:5**.
- 4. The common interpretation of this passage is that the jailor was asking for a formula whereby he could procure eternal life and righteousness. Then Paul and Silas provided him with that.
 - a. Since preaching the gospel is an act of obedience (**MAR 16:15 c/w ACT 10:42**), and believing on Jesus Christ is an act of obedience (**1JO 3:23; ROM 10:15-16**), then righteousness would come by the obedience of *three*, not one. **ROM 5:19**.
 - b. The common interpretation of **ACT 16:30-31** puts the power of life into the hands of the preacher and the hearer, but that power is only in Jesus Christ's hands. **JOH 5:21, 25, 39; 10:17-18; 17:2**.
 - (1) The common interpretation maintains that Jesus Christ died for all mankind, of whom some go to heaven and others to hell.
 - (2) The difference why one man ends up in heaven instead of hell is not because of what Jesus Christ did for him, since Christ did the same thing for the person in hell.
 - (3) In fact, this system affirms that Jesus Christ did not actually save ANYONE from hell by His bloodshed and death on the cross. He only made such a salvation a *possibility*.
 - (4) According to this system, it is the sinner's will that makes the difference between hell and heaven. The sinner's free will is the savior, not Christ, since Christ did the same thing for the man in hell as for the man in heaven!

- c. The common interpretation would make God's election of sinners unto eternal life and their regeneration the *effect of the sinner's will*. But Scripture plainly teaches that the sinner's will is not what produces these things. **ROM 9:16; JOH 1:12-13.**
 - d. Even if **ACT 16:31** is treating of eternal salvation, it does not necessarily establish a cause/effect formula whereby eternal salvation is the effect of the sinner's belief.
 - (1) If **ACT 16:31** is setting forth a cause/effect formula for eternal life, similar logic would demand that texts like **JOH 5:28-29; ROM 2:6-7; HEB 5:9** must be teaching eternal salvation by good works, not by grace.
 - (2) But grace excludes sinners' works. **ROM 11:5-6.**
5. If the jailor could believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, he:
- a. was more than a natural man only. **1CO 2:14.**
 - b. had the Holy Ghost. **1CO 12:3.**
 - c. was a son of God. **ROM 8:14; JOH 1:12-13.**
 - d. was born (again) of God. **1JO 5:1.**
 - e. was indwelt by God. **1JO 4:15.**
 - f. was justified in God's eyes. **ACT 13:39; ROM 1:17.**
 - g. had been ordained unto eternal life. **ACT 13:48.**
 - h. had eternal life. **JOH 5:24.**
6. There are numerous salvations from God (other than eternal salvation). **PSA 44:4; 34:4, 6; 2SAM 22:3.**
- a. Believing the gospel of Christ can save God's children from:
 - (1) ignorance and chastening. **LUK 12:48.**
 - (2) deception. **EPH 4:11-14.**
 - (3) do-it-yourself righteousness. **ROM 10:1-3.**
 - (4) fear of death. **HEB 2:15.**
 - (5) an untoward generation. **ACT 2:40.**
 - (6) the power and pollution of sin. **ROM 6:9-11.**
 - b. Believing the gospel of Christ can save God's children to:
 - (1) assurance of eternal life. **1JO 5:1, 13.**
 - (2) fellowship with God. **1JO 1:3.**
 - (3) fellowship with like believers. **ACT 2:40-42.**
 - (4) rest in Christ's mercies and promises. **MAT 11:28-30.**
 - (5) fullness of joy and peace. **1JO 1:4 c/w ROM 15:13.**
 - (6) valid worship of the true God. **JOH 4:23-24.**
7. Consider what believing on the Lord Jesus Christ did for the Philippian jailor.
- a. He was on the verge of suicide before the gospel, but afterwards was rejoicing in Christ in sober peace. c/w **MAR 5:13-15.**
 - b. Death no longer was a terror to him. **HEB 2:15.**
 - c. Faith had turned his weakness to strength. **HEB 11:34 c/w NEH 8:10.**
 - d. He had called upon the name of the Lord and received deliverance. **ROM 10:13.**
 - e. He and his house were secured and saved as promised. **ACT 16:33-34.**
 - f. Consider the jailor's experience in the light of **ISA 65:1.**
8. The account of the Philippian jailor's salvation is an example of gospel conversion and *temporal* salvation.
- a. He was obviously already a regenerate child of God, as proven by his ability to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - b. He had already been called inwardly by the quickening voice of Christ writing a new law in his heart. **JOH 5:25 c/w 1PE 5:10; HEB 8:10.**
 - c. His condition, though, was like Lazarus whom Christ raised from the dead

(**JOH 11:43-44**): alive, but still bound in the wrappings of the old nature, needing someone to set him free and help him to see.

- d. With Paul and Silas' preaching, the jailor was called outwardly to the liberated life of faith and light. **PHIL 2:12-15**.
- e. He is proof that Christ is *especially a Savior to them that believe*. **1TI 4:10**.