

This document is a summary of a series of postings for my blog regarding the issue of understanding true salvation and identifying false teachings.

## WHAT IS SALVATION?

The next few blog posts will focus on what it means to be saved. A study of prophecy is meaningless to one who has no hope for the future. It is heavy on my heart that the scripture is clear in declaring that relatively few people will come to possess saving faith.

*Matthew 7:13–14 “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, **and few there be that find it.**”*

One can't help but wonder why so few since God has so freely, lovingly and sacrificially provided the gift of salvation for any and all who will accept it.

*Ephesians 2:8–9 “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.”*

*Romans 10:13 “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”*

There are, of course, many who just refuse to acknowledge that there is a God, a Creator, a Supreme Authority that is sovereign over the universe as we know it. Scripture also tells us that these people are not being honest with themselves. The Lord has planted the seed of truth in the being of every person.

*Romans 1:19–21 “Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.”*

In context with the passage in Matthew 7, however, we know that false teachers are responsible for leading many into deception. It seems that a principal common factor in such teachings is an emphasis on “works.”

*Matthew 7:21–23 “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”*

I think this is such a popular tactic of the enemy for many reasons. It takes advantage of man's independent spirit and his desire to owe no one anything. It thrives in cultures that position man as a lowly creation that must earn the privilege to attain the highest level. It feeds off the sinner's guilt and his/her desire to atone

for their own sin. It sidesteps yielding to the authority of God; we want to think that we are in control.

As noted in the previous series of blogs, Satan loves to deceive using partial truths. It is true that works and salvation go hand-in-hand; works evidence one's salvation, but they do not provide salvation. My purpose is to take a look at what the scripture says about salvation so that you can be assured of your eternal future and equipped to identify false teaching.

It is not my intention to consider every verse in scripture regarding salvation. I will focus on those that, in my opinion, are effective in identifying false teaching. Again, I am writing from the heart with no specific outline in place, so please bear with me as I prayerfully seek to present the truth clearly.

### **False Teaching #1 – The Bible is unreliable and full of contradictions.**

This seemed to be a good beginning point since God's word is the foundation upon which all truth is based. When the enemy is able to get someone to doubt that God's word is the truth and without contradiction, it lays the foundation for many other false teachings. Either God is Who He says He is as revealed to us in His word, or our faith is worth nothing.

*Deuteronomy 32:4 "He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he."*

*Psalms 33:4 "For the word of the LORD is right; and all his works are done in truth."*

*Psalms 119:89 "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven."*

*Malachi 3:6 "For I am the LORD, I change not...."*

*James 1:17 "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."*

If God has lied to us about anything, there is no solid foundation for our faith. Though Paul was talking about the resurrection, this is basically what Paul was saying in his letter to the Corinthians.

*1 Corinthians 15:13–19 "But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: **And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.** Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."*

It is true that there are “apparent” contradictions in scripture, but that is not due to the original inspiration and revelation of that truth to man through the Holy Spirit.

*2 Timothy 3:16 “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:”*

These “seeming” contradictions are a result of many different factors—translations produced by men, differences in the meanings of words from language to language, an understanding of the culture of the time in which it was written, taking passages out of context, etc.

If you choose to believe that scripture is unreliable and contains contradictions, it makes no sense for you to believe any part of it. Your belief is either predicated on truth or it is not. If not, why choose to believe any part of it? I do believe that God is Who He says He is and that scripture is the only valid authority for determining truth.

**False Teaching #2 – There is no absolute truth or truth is relative; what’s true for you is not necessarily true for me.**

This teaching goes hand-in-hand with the previous one. Absolute truth by definition is a constant; something that you can depend on without regard to outside influences. It is true for all people at all times. It is also void of deception or error of any type. Truth can only be determined in reference to a solid foundation and can only be derived from a divine source. Francis Schaeffer stated it this way in support of Christianity in his essay “The Abolition of Truth and Morality”: “When I say Christianity is true I mean it is true to total reality—the total of what is, beginning with the central reality, the objective existence of the personal-infinite God. Christianity is not just a series of truths but Truth — Truth about all of reality.”

What does scripture say?

*John 14:6 “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, **the truth**, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”*

*Psalms 119:160 “Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever.”*

Man’s understanding of the truth may change, but the truth never changes. Truth will always conform to the character of Jesus according to His word as recorded by the Apostle John in the reference above.

Truth and righteousness are often paired in the scripture. To act according to truth and righteousness implies the existence of a standard from which to make that determination. As the Creator, only God qualifies as the source for this standard.

*Isaiah 40:28 "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding."*

*Ephesians 5:9–10 "(For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord."*

Not only must the source of truth be Divine, He must be unique to establish a unique standard for that truth.

*Isaiah 44:6 "Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God."*

### **False Teaching #3 – There is more than one gospel or more than one way to be saved.**

This is a very popular mantra because it allows one to define the authority or process by which they can achieve eternal life. It seems that very few want to accept God's way as the only way. Why? Because that would mean denying self and living according to the principles declared in God's word.

What does the scripture say?

*John 14:6 "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."*

*Acts 4:10–12 "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."*

These scriptures make it very clear that Jesus is the only One who can provide for our salvation. When one of the religious leaders of the Jews came to ask Jesus this very question, He gave him the following answer.

*John 3:3–7 "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. **That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.** Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."*

In other words, man must experience a spiritual rebirth in order to be saved. He then went on to relate one of the most well known verses in scripture.

*John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."*

This verse again emphasizes that salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul goes on to emphasize that unless we have the indwelling Holy Spirit, we are not saved.

*1 Corinthians 3:16–17 "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, **and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?** If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."*

*Romans 8:9 "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. **Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.**"*

*Ephesians 1:12–14 "That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: **in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,** Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."*

The question then becomes: How do you know you possess the indwelling Spirit? Because there will be evidence in your life of His presence. Consider the truth God revealed through Paul in his letter to the Galatians.

*Galatians 5:22–24 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance [self control]: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."*

Paul is very clear in this letter in contrasting the fruits of the Spirit and the works of the flesh.

*Galatians 5:19–21 "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."*

I thought it was helpful to look up all of these words when going through Galatians; following are notes on a few that gave me a better understanding. *Uncleanness* is a reference to either physical or spiritual impurity. *Lasciviousness* is a reference to the lusts of the flesh. *Variance* is a reference to quarrelings. *Emulations* are likened to jealousy and envy—misguided passions. *Seditions* make reference to causing division or dissension.

Obviously, some Christians will live so as to give evidence to the indwelling Holy Spirit to a greater or lesser degree than others. These verses are given to identify the general characteristics that evidence whether one is living according

to the leading of the Holy Spirit or according to the flesh. The word "do" (v 21) comes from the Greek "prasso" which means to practice or perform repeatedly or habitually. A Christian can and will sin; but he/she will not *practice* sin.

#### **False Teaching #4 – Salvation can be earned through doing good works or all “good” people will go to heaven.**

It's easy for people to fall prey to this false teaching because it lowers the standard significantly. Most people consider themselves to be “good.” Many believe that all they have to do is make sure their good deeds outweigh the bad.

“Good” deeds according to the world's standards encompass a wider range of actions than those that qualify according to scripture. We tend to think of good deeds in terms of humanitarian aid, preserving the environment, lending a helping hand to your neighbor, etc. According to scripture, the key issue is motive.

If your motive is for personal gratification, your reward is in the satisfaction of doing the deed. You have “earned” nothing with respect to eternity.

*Matthew 6:1–5 “Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, **that they may have glory of men.** Verily I say unto you, They have their reward....And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, **that they may be seen of men.** Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.”*

Only if your desire is to glorify God, do your works qualify as good and accrue to heavenly reward.

*Matthew 5:16 “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, **and glorify your Father which is in heaven.**”*

Only by allowing the Holy Spirit to work through you can you perform good works.

*John 15:4–5 “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: **for without me ye can do nothing.**”*

So many of the cults are predicated on living according to a prescribed set of laws. Sometimes they take these laws right out of scripture and clearly out of context. Some even declare that salvation is by faith **plus** certain works. Scripture is very clear in declaring that it is through faith alone that one can obtain salvation; no one will be justified by their works. If that were possible, the death of Jesus on the cross was in vain.

*Ephesians 2:8–9 “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.”*

*Galatians 2:16 “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.”*

Our works prove our faith, but our works do not earn us our salvation. This the primary focus of the book of James.

*James 2:14–18 “What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.”*

Jesus phrased it differently, but the truth is the same.

*John 14:21 “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.”*

*John 13:34–35 “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”*

### **False Teaching #5 – It doesn't matter what you believe as long as you are sincere.**

The first thought that crossed my mind was that one can sincerely believe that God exists without trusting Him in faith for salvation. Again we turn to the letter of James.

*James 2:19 “Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.”*

Jesus declared boldly to the leaders of the Jews that though they declared to sincerely believe the scriptures, they were sincerely wrong.

*John 5:39–40 “You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.”*

There is no better example in scripture of one who recognized that he was sincerely wrong in his beliefs than Saul, later to be known as the Apostle Paul. He even stood by and witnessed the murder of Stephen. He was on a mission to destroy as many followers of Jesus as he could when he was confronted by Jesus Christ and immediately recognized that he had been sincerely wrong in his beliefs. (See Acts 7-9)

Again, this false teaching totally goes against the word of God. If the Word of God is true (and it is), those who embrace this philosophy are in for a very sad awakening before the throne of judgment. I am reminded of the words of Solomon.

*Proverbs 16:25 "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."*

Scripture is everywhere clear that no one will get to heaven except through Jesus.

*1 Timothy 2:3-6 "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all...."*

### **False Teaching #6 – A loving God would not allow suffering and evil, and He would not send people to hell.**

People who make such statements totally disregard the fact that God chose to give man the freedom to make his own choices regarding living in the safety and security of obedience to Him or deciding to disregard God's one command of prohibition to him and suffer the consequences. I believe the purpose of that instruction was to provide a basis through which man could show his love for God through obedience. Jesus was very clear in declaring obedience as evidence of such love.

*John 14:23 "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."*

The Apostle John faithfully echoed this truth as taught to him by the Savior. The language used in the Complete Jewish Bible translation is very clear.

*1 John 5:2-3 "Here is how we know that we love God's children: when we love God, we also do what he commands. For loving God means obeying his commands."*

People who hold to this reasoning are basically stating that a loving God would only have created men to function as robots, a being that could not in effect truly love Him. Even from a perspective of human reasoning, that would be like creating toys to play with.

Those who hold to this reasoning also discount the character of God. Not only is God love, but He is also righteous and just. The one character trait does not preclude

possession of the other as an attribute of God. Webster defines righteousness as "Doing, or according with, that which is right; yielding to all their due; just...." In other words, God's righteousness demands that unrighteousness be judged.

*Deuteronomy 32:4 "He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he."*

*Jeremiah 9:24 "But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD."*

Righteous judgment demands that sin have consequences. God warned man from the beginning that sin would result in death. Scripture gives clear warning that judgment awaits the wicked and resurrection to new life awaits those who choose to accept God's gift of salvation in Jesus.

*Psalms 9:16-17 "The LORD is known by the judgment which he executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Higgaion. Selah. The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."*

*Matthew 10:28 "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."*

*John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."*

Jesus was very clear in declaring very different future for the good (those declared righteous in Christ) and the wicked.

*John 5:28-29 "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."*

*John 3:36 "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."*

Our Creator, a God of love and righteousness, sovereignly chose instead to give man the freedom to make his own choices with the ability to truly love and in His omniscience (knowing before creation that man would choose to disobey Him) provided for man to be restored to righteousness and escape the judgment of sin through the willing sacrifice of His precious Son, Jesus Christ, who suffered that judgment for them.

*Romans 5:17-18 "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life."*

2 Corinthians 5:21 *"For He [God the Father] hath made Him [His Son Jesus Christ] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."* [brackets mine]

As our Creator, He had the right and authority to determine the appropriate judgment for sin and wickedness as identified according to the standards He established. Those who hold to the claim that God is not loving for allowing man the freedom to make his own choices refuse to accept that man is accountable for those choices—not God. God works within His creation through the choices of man. When He used evil kings to judge His people, those kings were acting in accordance with their own desires. Does this mean that God cannot choose to act supernaturally within His creation to accomplish His plans and purposes? Of course not.

Isaiah 64:8 *"But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand."*

Isaiah 29:15–16 *"Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the LORD, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us? Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?"*

God is sovereign in power and authority and His character assures those actions to be loving and righteous. The problem for man is our limited ability to think and reason in light of those actions.

Isaiah 55:8–9 *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."*

It's always interesting to me that people are very passionate about holding God accountable for His actions according to their own standards without regard to the accountability of man before God according to His standards.

### **False Teaching #7 – There is no future for man beyond this life or all religions lead to the same end.**

Some of the scriptures that refute that first part of this statement were quoted in the previous post, but they are worth listing here again.

John 3:16 *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."*

John 5:28–29 *"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."*

*John 3:36 "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."*

I think it is significant to note that even Job (the book bearing his name generally considered to be the oldest book in scripture) expected to see God after death.

*Job 19:25–27 "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me."*

David knew that he would see his baby son in the after life and that he would live with God forever.

*2 Samuel 12:22–23 "And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether GOD will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."*

*Psalms 23:6 "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever."*

As to the assertion that all religions ultimately lead one to the same end point, scripture is clear in declaring that only through Jesus can one attain eternal life. This was addressed in the post pertaining to False Teaching #3. I think the key verse to this truth is John 14:6, *"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."*

The Jews believe in an eternal future with God without reference to Jesus. How sad that their rejection of the Messiah has led to such pain and sorrow for their people.

The followers of Islam believe in the possibility of a heavenly future with Allah, but Allah is nothing like the God of the Bible. He is capricious in action and changeable in nature according to their holy book which is filled with contradictions.

Generally, the followers of Buddha hope to achieve nirvana by advancing to higher spiritual levels through numerous reincarnations. Nirvana is a state in which there is neither suffering, desire nor sense of self. Some would express this as annihilation, others as the state of extreme bliss and enlightenment.

Those who follow the Hindu religion believe similar to the Buddhists, but their nirvana will be achieved through absorption into the Supreme Being.

There are, of course, many other "religions" in the world—Shinto, Taoism, Wiccan, Scientology, etc. They all have a unique perspective on human life and afterlife. The

one thing that all of these religions have in common is that their worldview rejects the truth of scripture.

The many Christian cults that have come into being are based on teachings that corrupt the word of God or insist that they have received new revelations of truth. They deceive their followers by declaring that: you can become gods, everyone is saved and exists in an eternal spirit world, heaven and hell are a state of mind, and/or the eternal state is achieved through one's works. Many of these cults are labeled as "Christian," but they are false religions according to the truth of scripture. Several times in scripture God warns against adding to or taking away from His word.

*Deuteronomy 4:2 "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you."*

*Proverbs 30:5–6 "Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar."*

*Revelation 22:18–19 "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."*

Paul talked about the emergence of these cults in his letter to Timothy.

*1 Timothy 4:1–2 "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron...."*

Having used several posts to identify false teachings, the next post will focus on salvation as presented in scripture.

### **What Must I Do to be Saved?**

The Philippian jailer posed this very question to Paul and Silas. Their answer was simple but is packed with truth.

*Acts 16:30–32 "And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house."*

We often hear verses 30-31 quoted, but very seldom do we hear quoted verse 32. Obviously, one can't believe on Jesus Christ as Lord without knowing who He is and what He teaches according to His word.

We can be very sure that Paul would have been very careful to explain the gospel message to this man and his family. Paul actually identifies the gospel in his letter to the Corinthians.

*1 Corinthians 15:3–4 “For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures....”*

Those scriptures would certainly have included the message of the prophet Isaiah.

*Isaiah 53:5–6 “But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”*

In light of these scriptures, believing on the Lord Jesus Christ requires that one acknowledge his/her sin before the Lord. It requires that one believe in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. It requires that one understand that Jesus served as the only acceptable sacrifice for our sin before YHWH, the self-existent eternal God.

I am sure that Paul would have explained that salvation is a gift that cannot be earned as he so clearly told the Ephesians.

*Ephesians 2:8–9 “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.”*

Paul would surely have explained that belief would be evidenced by not being afraid to declare one's faith before other men. This is according to the words of Jesus as recorded by His disciples.

*Luke 12:8–9 “Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.”*

*Matthew 10:32 “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.”*

Paul summarized these truths clearly in his letter to the Romans.

*Romans 10:9–10 “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”*

That again brings us back to an important point that was included in Paul's original answer to the Philippian jailer. One must confess Jesus as “Lord.” In other words, one's sincere belief in Jesus requires that he/she submit to Him as

the ruling authority in one's life according to the Word of God. This is really the point that causes so many to accept false teaching. For some reason it seems that men would rather trust in their own efforts rather than simply submit to God as Lord and accept the gift of salvation on His terms as revealed in scripture. The words of Jesus are very clear on this truth. Those who declare their faith in God while honoring the teachings of men more than the teaching of His word are not true believers. Those who truly love Him will evidence that love by their obedience to His word.

*Matthew 15:8-9 "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."*

*Mark 7:7-9 "Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition."*

*John 14:21 "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."*

The Apostle John's first letter focuses on this truth. He is very bold in his declaration of the truth without regard for political correctness.

*1 John 2:3-5 "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him."*

I am sure that Paul taught this family much more about how to live to honor God in obedience to His word. In this short post I have faithfully explained as clearly as I know how from God's word what it means to be saved. In light of this truth, I ask you to consider these words of Paul to the Corinthians.

*2 Corinthians 13:5 "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves."*

When making this examination, also remember that one who has truly accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior receives the indwelling Holy Spirit Who will give evidence of His presence.

*1 Corinthians 3:16 "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"*

*Romans 8:9 "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."*

*Galatians 5:22–23 “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance:”*

*Ephesians 5:9–10 “(For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.”*