

Acts 16:30

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

Analysis

And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?—The Philippian jailer's question follows an earthquake that freed prisoners but didn't prompt escape, convincing him of divine intervention. His address 'Sirs' (κύριοι) shows respect; his question 'what must I do' (τί με δεῖ ποιεῖν) assumes salvation requires action. The Greek 'sōthō' (be saved) likely meant initially 'saved from consequences of prisoner escape' but Paul redirects to eternal salvation. This is Scripture's clearest statement of the seeker's question, receiving the clearest gospel answer (v.31).

Historical Context

Paul and Silas, imprisoned after exorcising a fortune-telling spirit (vv.16-24), sang hymns at midnight when an earthquake opened prison doors (vv.25-26). The jailer, about to commit suicide assuming prisoners escaped (v.27), was stopped by Paul's assurance that none had fled. This demonstration of Christian integrity and supernatural power prompted his inquiry. He and his household were immediately baptized (v.33).

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. What circumstances in your life have prompted the question 'what must I do to be saved?'
2. How does the jailer's question reveal both human inability and awareness of need?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	προαγαγὼν	αὐτοὺς	ἔξω	ἔφη	Κύριοι	τί	με	δεῖ
And	brought	them	out	and said	Sirs	what	I	must
G2532	G4254	G846	G1854	G5346	G2962	G5101	G3165	G1163
ποιεῖν	ἵνα	σωθῶ						
do	to	be saved						
G4160	G2443	G4982						

Additional Cross-References

Acts 2:37 (Parallel theme): Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

Isaiah 58:9 (Parallel theme): Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity;

Acts 14:15 (Parallel theme): And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein:

Acts 22:10 (Parallel theme): And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.

Matthew 3:8 (Parallel theme): Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:

Luke 3:10 (Parallel theme): And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then?

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