

From Where I Sit . . .

Life's Most Important Question

While Paul and Silas sang praises to God from within the Roman jail at midnight, a jailer slept while on guard-duty, unaware, no doubt, of the importance of the hour. Little did he realize that he would soon encounter the mighty power of God. This man understood authority, power, responsibility. He was answerable with his very life for the prisoners in this dungeon to those who had authority over him. Soon he was to witness a power that superceded that of Roman emperors, Roman idols, and Roman chains. In response to this power he would eagerly do whatever it took for salvation.

When this Philippian jailer of Acts 16 felt the earthquake, saw the jail cells opened and the chains removed from his prisoners -- but that they had not escaped, he recognized he was not dealing with ordinary people or ordinary powers. We cannot understand that he immediately knew all the answers. I doubt seriously if he even understood all the questions. He just knew that he had experienced an encounter with a genuine and ultimate authority -- the real thing. He was at least vaguely aware that he was dealing with a power greater than the Roman government and all the Roman "gods" combined.

Whatever he knew, whatever he meant by the question, he immediately sought the answer to what has no doubt brought more sermons to their conclusion than any other, "What Must I Do To Be Saved?" Undoubtedly, this is the most important question ever asked in the whole existence of mankind. The answer to this question will determine where one spends eternity.

The answer recorded in Acts 16:31 is the hope of the world: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." This man did not already, and could not start believing in one whom he did not even know. He had to be introduced to Jesus. "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Romans 10:13-14). So verse 32 of Acts 16 continues the message of salvation: "And they spake unto him the word of the Lord..." He was so convinced of this "word of the Lord" that he was baptized into Jesus that very same hour of the night.

How can there be so much disagreement in the religious world on such an important subject as salvation. We can only wish that everyone would be as sincere as the jailer was. In essence his message was, "Lord, I'll do anything it takes." There was no argument about it. He was baptized that very same hour of the night. Let us all maintain that same open and willing mind in our search for salvation.

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