

Who Needs Saving?

The Philippian jailer asked Paul and Silas what he should do to be saved. So, they told him what he (and everybody else) should do: “Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved...” (Acts 16:30,31).

Too simple? Too easy? On the contrary, the aspects and events leading up to God’s implementation of the plan of salvation are extraordinarily complex and costly, far beyond human understanding and ability. The sincere but naïve notion of soul salvation by self-effort is characteristically human. The world is full of humanly conceived religions that require *me* to work for my desired salvation. *No human being would devise an acceptable and effective religion (plan) that would have God himself meet the requirements and the cost.* That’s not the way the human mind works.

From a purely human point of view, there are many relatively good people in this world. I personally know some of those people. You might be one of them. *But all of this has nothing to do with how God gets people to heaven.*

“God does not show favoritism...” (Acts 10:34). He believes in equal opportunity. He is impartial. Heaven is accessible to the handicapped, to the disadvantaged, to the underprivileged, to the ignorant, to absolutely *everyone* – not just to the materially wealthy, the extremely intelligent, the highly motivated and the morally superior.

As a solution, “...God has bound all men [humans] over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all” (Romans 11:32). *The Lord leveled the playing field.* He classifies all humans (no exceptions) as sinners. (See Romans 3:9,23.) Our “sin” is our failure to keep God’s just laws. “...the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, [literally: Scripture has locked up everybody under sin] so that what was promised, being given through Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe” (Galatians 3:22). The Bible says that Jesus Christ is the only person in the entire universe who is qualified to release us from this biblical lockup. By the way, “sin” (Gr. *hamartano*) means “to miss the mark,” like an arrow that falls short of its target.

Jesus said that the human heart (our human nature), generally, is pretty bad. What matters most to God is not how we show ourselves to other people but what we really are on the inside.

”For from within, out of men's [people’s] hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly” (Mark 7:21-22). (See also Galatians 5:19-21.)

Someone reading this might say, “But, I’m not that kind of a person.” And it’s true; some people, by *human* standards, are comparatively good. However, that does not change the fact that, “...all have sinned; all fall short of God’s glorious standard” (Romans 3:23 NLT). Why am I called a *sinner*? Because God says so. And he should know. ◇◇◇