

BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH OF ERIE
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“WHY WE BELIEVE - WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT SALVATION”

**SERIES: The Foundations on Which We Stand –
Why We Believe What We Believe!**

JOHN 3:1-18

Our purpose in this series is to reacquaint ourselves with the fundamentals of our faith. So, this morning I am speaking about Why We Believe What We Believe – About Salvation. The reason we’ve done this series is to get us anchored once again in the fundamental truths of what we believe as Christians and what the Bible teaches us about these foundational truths.

What does it take to be saved? What a question. If you were to ask the average person on the street what it takes to have a right relationship with God, what does it take to get to Heaven, you would get one hundred varieties of the same answer:

- ◆ Be good.
- ◆ Walk the straight and narrow.
- ◆ Obey the Ten Commandments.
- ◆ Don’t lie, etc.

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross for all mankind as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice, and that the sufficiency of this atoning sacrifice to accomplish the redemption and justification of all who trust in Him is assured by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead (**Romans 3:24-25; Romans 4:25; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Timothy 4:10; Hebrews 2:9; 1 Peter 1:3-5; 1 Peter 2:24 and 2 Peter 2:1**).

As I begin this morning, I want you to think about the story of **two MEN**: One was **Lot** found in **Genesis 19** who is associated with the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. The other is of a man that everyone would admire and respect his name is **Nicodemus** found in **John 3**. A man so known for his religious and charitable deeds that people would name their kids after him. But what does the Bible say about these two men? First, turn in your Bible’s to **2 Peter 2: 6-9** and we see that although Lot was a despicable person, yet he was saved so as by fire. So you remember **Lot’s** legacy was selfishness, greed, incest, as you listen to Peter’s assessment. And what about our friend **Nicodemus** in **John 3**. Yet here we will find in the word of the Lord Jesus what a person must do to be saved and become a Christian.

First, we see the...

I. THE REQUIREMENT OF SALVATION - John 3

V-1 gives us the setting. And in **verse 2** we see that he comes with compliments on his lips, he begins speaking with Jesus. Now look at **V-3** this strikes me as just so very strange that Jesus would say this to Nicodemus rather than to the Woman at the well in **John 4**.

Salvation does not come through education, Nicodemus was highly educated, and salvation does not come through religion, Nicodemus was highly religious. Salvation is much more than merely acquiring knowledge or going to church or becoming a better person, Nicodemus was all of these things. Salvation has to do with **being born again V-3**. This is the requirement for salvation.

Now Nicodemus really does not have any idea what being born again is, so he asks Jesus what that means **V-4**. And Jesus answers Nicodemus’ question by providing an explanation, and an illustration. The **explanation** is in **verses 5-13** and the **illustration** is in **verses 14-18**. **Vs. 5-13** is the explanation of being born again; that it is a **spiritual birth** enabling us to see the kingdom of God and is entirely at the discretion of the Spirit of God. This is the requirement for salvation: we must be born again.

II. THE ROUTINE METHOD OF SALVATION

Here in **Vs. 14-15** we see the method of salvation; it teaches us about the new birth. That’s how Jesus uses this story. Turn with me to **Numbers 21:4-9**. And here is how Jesus applies this story and gives us the **illustration** of the New Birth. Jesus used this story as an illustration of salvation, as a teaching tool. So, what can we really learn about salvation from this story?

And finally, it shows us the results....

III. THE RESULTS OF SALVATION

The people looked and received life. They were no longer under the curse and condemnation and death; they were alive and free. Then Jesus gives us the most well know verse in the Bible – **John 3:16**. And so we see in this verse that the cross is proof of God’s love for the world. It’s the love of a God Whose heart beats for His people, it’s the love of a God Whose heart bleeds for His people. It’s the love of a God Who would rather die for us than to live without us.

In **Vs-17-19** we see again the **RESULTS** of salvation. Now this just makes sense, doesn’t it? If Jesus perished in our place, then we need not perish. If Jesus was condemned instead of us, then we can go free. See in reality all who believe are like Barabbas. Listen to me this morning as I close:

- (1) Salvation is necessary
- (2) Salvation is an act of love
- (3) Salvation is undeserved
- (4) Salvation is Free
- (5) Salvation is costly

