

Written by Luke as a sequel to the Gospel that bears his name, the Book of Acts, has been variously subtitled as the “Acts of the Apostles,” or the “Acts of the Holy Spirit.” Of the 66 books of the Bible, this is one of my favorites, not only because it is the bold saga of Jesus’ church on mission and the plethora of miracles and martyrs, but also because of the prevalent conversions and salvations that occurred. Today we will look at a few of them and then do something we all must do.

### **Mass Salvations**

There are at least four mass salvations recorded in Acts. For instance, in Acts 2, Peter gets his “street preach” on to the Jerusalem crowd that rejected and murdered Jesus. They are convicted to the core and ask a question I have yearned to hear for decades, “What must we do to be saved?” Peter replies (2:38):

Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ  
for the forgiveness of your sins.

3000 people immediately repented and were baptized. Later on, mass salvations occurred in places like Corinth, Ephesus, and Samaria. In Acts, we have eleven individual salvation stories as well. My favorites include a Sordid Sorcerer, an Erstwhile Ethiopian, a Centurion from Caesarea, and a Suicidal Security Guard.

### **Simon the Sordid Sorcerer (Acts 8)**

Acts 8 tells us about a sordid sorcerer named Simon. Listen to his resume in v9-11:

9 Now for some time a man named Simon had practiced sorcery in the city and amazed all the people of Samaria. He boasted that he was someone great, 10 and all the people, both high and low, gave him their attention and exclaimed, “This man is the divine power known as the Great Power.” 11 They followed him because he had amazed them for a long time with his magic.

This master of the dark arts really had his people spell bound. However, when Philip preached to the Samaritans about a superior power in the person of Jesus, Simon immediately “believed and was baptized” (v13).

### **Erstwhile Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8)**

After Simon’s sensational salvation, the Spirit of God sends Philip down to the highway between Jerusalem and Gaza. There he runs into an erstwhile Ethiopian Eunuch who is heading home after finishing some business transactions for his queen, Candace. It’s a long, slow, and boring trip so he hunkers down to read the best-selling novel, “Isaiah 53” from the backseat of his chariot. At an intersection Philip asks the Ethiopian, “Do you understand it?” He responds, “It’s all Greek to me.” “Who is the prophet talking about?” Philip proceeds to tell him that it’s about the Suffering Servant named Jesus. The Ethiopian is amazed and as soon as they come across some water he asks Philip, “What prevents me from being baptized right now?” Philip replies, “Nothing,” so he dunks him on the spot (8:38). The first road-side baptism in history.

### **Caesarean Centurion Cornelius (Acts 10)**

Cornelius is one of the all-time good guys in Bible. He is a Roman officer that holds the rank of “centurion” and is stationed in Caesarea. He is the very first non-Jew to whom the Gospel is presented. He had the reputation as being “Devout and God fearing” along with the rest of his family (v2). One night, God gives him a vision to connect with Peter who is doing an evangelistic crusade in Joppa. Peter eventually arrives at the centurion’s home where he, his family, and near friends are gathered to “Hear the apostle’s message” (10:22, 33). Peter lays it out about the “whys, what-fors, and therefores” of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ (v43). The centurion, his friends and family immediately believe and are subsequently baptized.

### **Suicidal Security Guard (Acts 16)**

Paul and Silas encountered great opposition in the Roman colony of Philippi. They are thrown into prison and beaten within an inch of their lives. As they are awaiting their execution, God initiates a “mega earthquake” that opens the prison doors and frees everyone. The guy doing all the beating, the security guard, knows full well that if even one prisoner escapes, he’s a goner thus, he decides to take matters into his own hands, literally. He grabs his sword and is ready to commit suicide. At the last second Paul

stops him, promising him that no one had escaped, nor will they. The suicidal security guard's reaction is recorded for us in Acts 16:29-30:

29 He rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas.  
30 He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

Ask a good preacher how to get saved and he will tell you exactly what Paul and Silas told the suicidal security guard, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be baptized" (v31). The security guard immediately believes, and then he and his family members are baptized. Luke characterizes the security guard's conversion, and that of his family, as being "filled with joy" (v34).

### **God Can Save Anyone at Anytime**

Time fails us to mention perhaps of one of the most prolific of all salvations, that of Paul, or even that of the lovely lady named Lydia, or a couple of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers on Mars hill. Regardless of where a person has been or done. Regardless of his or her background, social standing, or status, Christ can and will save all people. He doesn't distinguish or differentiate. Salvation is for all, no matter the "walk of life." Salvation is, as John Wesley put it, for "whosoever will."

However, there is one incredible dynamic in these salvation/conversion stories, and that one thing is the immediacy of decision. Whether it was the Sorcerer, Centurion, Ethiopian, or Security Guard, when they heard the invitation to salvation, they immediately acted on it. They didn't procrastinate. They didn't come up with all sorts of reasons why now just isn't the right time. Others, have unfortunately, however. Jesus invited three guys to follow him. One said, "I'll follow you when it's convenient." Another, "I'll follow you after my parents die." The last promised, "I'll follow you after I wrap up my family affairs" (Luke 9:57-61). These folks must have gotten advice from Mark Twain when he said:

Never put off until tomorrow what you can do the day after tomorrow just as well.

### **Five Types of Procrastinators**

It's well known that procrastination is the enemy of success. As such, there are five types of procrastinators:

- 1) The Thrill Seeker. This person gets a big adrenaline rush by getting things done right before the drop-dead date or deadline.
- 2) The Avoider. Whether it's fear of failure or success, this person would rather die than make a decision.
- 3) The Undecider. Maybe it's fear of the unknown but the "undecider" folds on decision making quicker than an overcaffeinated origami artist.
- 4) The Perfectionist. Perfectionists set such unrealistic and high standards for themselves they end up getting the dreaded "paralysis from analysis" syndrome.
- 5) The Busy Body. Oddly, this person procrastinates on the big things by continually busying themselves with the small things.

If you tend to be a procrastinator today, bless your little heart but don't procrastinate on the biggest decision of your life; to accept Jesus' invitation to salvation. God led you to this "Salvation Station" this morning for this very reason. However, the devil will use any of the five procrastination strategies on you because he knows your best life awaits you. He doesn't want to lose a soul. "Today is the Day of Salvation" 2 Corinthians 2:6 reminds us so let's get saved today. Pray with me now.