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the same, though.

Paul and Silas did not rise, dress, and depart – under haste or otherwise. Instead, they remained where they were and when the jailor presumed his inmates had fled and was about to fall on his own sword, *“Paul called with a loud voice, saying, ‘Do yourself no harm, for we are all here’”* (28).

Whereas Peter was attended by an angel who commanded his departure, Paul and Silas received no instruction to flee. They knew they were not free to presume upon the silence of God (Proverbs 30:6).

Unlike Peter, who was under a sentence of death following the execution of his fellow apostle, Paul and Silas, while mistreated and abused, were not facing the king’s sword. Examples throughout Scripture prove that civil disobedience may be divinely warranted when innocents may perish, such as when Moses’ parents concealed him from Pharaoh’s edict (Hebrews 11:23), when Rahab hid the Israelite spies (28), or when Paul escaped Damascus (2nd Corinthians 11:32-33). Yet, Paul and Silas were not under threat of death in Philippi; rather, the magistrates ordered their release the next morning (Acts 16:35).

Curious readers want to know why *“the doors were opened”* if the persecuted preachers were not meant to walk through them. Simply enough, the doors were opened for someone else! They were not doors of escape for inmates who were about to be released anyway, but doors of salvation for the jailor!

When he observed Paul’s and Silas’s integrity – remaining when they could have fled, and their genuine concern for his wellbeing – urging him not to commit suicide, he realized that he needed to listen to anything they were going to tell him. He *“ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas”* (29), and, having brought them out of the cell, asked, *“Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”* (30). He and his family were told to believe in Christ (31-32), the jailor demonstrated his repentance by tending their wounds (33_a), and *“immediately he and all his family were baptized”* (33_b)!

The Lord opened doors in a spectacular way that night in Philippi, and, thankfully, those good men had the sense to know they had not been opened for them, but for others. May every disciple be so discerning.

RESTRICTED ACCESS

Bryan Matthew Dockens

Admittance to heaven will be limited to those who are ready (Matthew 25:1-13).

There will be a password. Thankfully, it will be easier than the uppercase/lowercase/special-symbol/greater-than-8-characters combination required of so many online accounts. The word is “Jesus.” *“Every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”* (Philippians 2:11).

There will be a blood test. Heaven is a place for those covered in the blood of Jesus. *“In Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ”* (Ephesians 2:13).

There will be a dress code. The New Testament is replete with commands for what one must *“put on”* in order to meet God’s approval. *“Now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us **put on the armor of light**. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But **put on the Lord Jesus Christ**, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lust”* (Romans 13:11-14). In order to *“put on”* Christ, one must be baptized into Him. *“As many of you as were baptized into Christ have **put on Christ**”* (Galatians 3:27). Once in Christ, Christians must behave accordingly. *“Now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have **put on the new man** who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all. Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, **put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things **put on love**, which is the bond of perfection”*** (Colossians 3:8-15).

Now is the time to make ready. Learn the password, apply the blood, and put on Christ.

**"WHAT MUST I DO
TO BE SAVED?"**

ACTS 16:30

LEARN THE GOSPEL

John 6:45; Romans 10:17

BELIEVE IN CHRIST

Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16

CONFESS CHRIST

Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 3:19; 17:30

BE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST

Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-6

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"THE ASSEMBLING OF
OURSELVES TOGETHER"**

HEBREWS 10:24-25

SUNDAY

Worship @ 10:00 a.m.

Studies @ 11:45 a.m.

WEDNESDAY

Studies & Worship @ 7:00 p.m.

75 Sherrod Boulevard

Belén, New Mexico

Seekers Welcome.

Members Expected.

**"IF A MAN IS OVERTAKEN IN
ANY TRESPASS..."**

RESTORE SUCH A ONE"

GALATIANS 6:1

CONFESS TRESPASSES

James 5:16; 1st John 1:9

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 8:22

PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS

Acts 8:22

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"A WORD FITLY SPOKEN IS
LIKE APPLES OF GOLD IN
SETTINGS OF SILVER"**

PROVERBS 25:11

"Nothing grows a Christian like a serious commitment to a single church, week in and week out, for years and years. Not conferences. Not social media. Not even personal devotions. The local church is where mature Christians are slowly forged in the fires of mundane faithfulness."

– Michael Foster

"WHOLE COUNSEL"

ACTS 20:27

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"THE DOORS WERE OPENED" FOR SOMEONE ELSE

Bryan Matthew Dockens

After King Herod executed the apostle James and observed how it pleased his Jewish subjects, he set out to repeat his success, having Peter arrested with the intent to slay him at Passover (Acts 12:1-5).

While Peter awaited his death, bound by two chains, between two guards inside and two outside, he was awakened from sleep by an angel who struck him and urged him to rise, dress, and depart with haste. The apostle followed the heavenly messenger past both guard posts and to the city's iron gate *"which opened to them of its own accord"* (6-10).

Having previously thought he was in a trance, Peter realized he had, in fact, escaped prison and a sentence of death, concluding, *"Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent His angel, and has delivered me from the hand of Herod and from all the expectation of the Jewish people"* (11).

On another occasion, a different apostle also sat in prison with his fellow preacher when miracles unshackled them and opened the prison doors. *"At midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed"* (Acts 16:25-26). The outcome was not – Continued on page 2 –

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