

Introduction:

Do you know who cut off Malchus' ear? Many of you already do. However, during this lesson we will examine this question as if we didn't already know the answer. We are not answering this question just to answer this question. Actually, we are using it as a demonstration of how to answer Bible questions. When we are done, we will take what we have learned and use it to answer another more important Bible question.

Discussion:

- I. Who cut off Malchus' ear?
 - A. **Matthew 26:51-54**
 1. The attacker was one who was with Jesus.
 2. The victim was the slave of the high priest.
 3. The weapon was a sword.
 4. The wound was a missing ear.
 5. Jesus' response was for the one to put the sword away. If He wanted to, He could call angels to fight His way through this, but the scriptures must be fulfilled.
 - B. **Mark 14:47-49**
 1. The attacker was one who stood by.
 2. The victim was the slave of the high priest.
 3. The weapon was a sword.
 4. The wound was a missing ear.
 5. No response from Jesus is recorded.
 - C. **Luke 22:49-51**
 1. The attacker was a certain one of them who was around Jesus.
 2. The victim was the slave of the high priest.
 3. The weapon was implied to be a sword.
 4. The wound was a missing right ear.
 5. Jesus' response was stopping the one who cut off the ear and healing the victim.
 - D. **John 18:10-11**
 1. The attacker was Simon Peter.
 2. The victim was Malchus, the slave of the high priest.
 3. The weapon was a sword.
 4. The wound was a missing right ear.
 5. Jesus' response was to tell Peter to put up the sword. Jesus had to drink the cup which His Father gave Him to drink.
 - E. Clearly we can see that Simon Peter cut off Malchus' ear.
- II. What did we learn about answering Bible questions?
 - A. *Use the Bible.* This may seem so obvious that it should not even be mentioned. However, the first rule for answering Bible questions is to use the Bible. You may have already known the answer to this simple question. But if you did, it was only because you had read it in the Bible. Other Bible questions may not be so simple. The more complex they are the easier it is for our memories to become confused. Thus, it is always good to answer Bible questions by going back to the Bible and seeing what it actually says—not just what we thought we remember it saying.
 - B. *Consider all the Bible says to answer the question.* When answering Bible questions we need to look at everything the Bible says about the question. We could not even know the full story about this simple circumstance without reading all four of the gospel accounts of it. Each one provides different information. So it is with just about every Bible question. We need to read all the Bible says about our question before coming up with an answer. **Psalm 119:160** says the sum of God's Word is truth. We need to look at all that it says.

C. *Allow the Bible to interpret itself.* When we look at various passages to answer our question, we should not argue them against each other. Rather, we should see how they go together to make a solid, unified whole. In **I Corinthians 14:33**, Paul said that God is not the author of confusion. Thus, when we are confused it is not because God has confused us, but because we have not allowed God's Word to interpret itself. Can you imagine two people arguing over our question—One claiming that we could not know who cut off Malchus' ear (in fact, how do we know it was Malchus' ear) because **Matthew 26** did not tell us. While the other contends that it was Peter because of **John 18**. Or could you see two people arguing over how Jesus responded because each account pictures it differently? Of course not. With this simple question, we know that we can easily place all the accounts together into a solid unified whole. We would not argue them against each other, but would allow the Bible to interpret itself.

III. Using what we have learned—How can I be saved from my sins?

- A. I recognize that to read every verse that deals with every aspect of this question we would probably need to begin at **Genesis 1:1** and read all the way through **Revelation 22:21**. However, boiling this question down to its simplest meaning of how to initially enter Christ and be forgiven we can look at a handful of scriptures that sum up the Bible's answer to our question.
- B. **Romans 3:23-24** says we are justified freely by God's grace. That is, we cannot earn forgiveness, it is God's gift. **Romans 9:15** says God will have mercy on whomever He chooses. Therefore, we want to know upon whom has God said He will bestow mercy and grace.
- C. **Ephesians 2:8-9** says that while we are saved by grace, it is through faith. Thus, forgiveness is God's gift to us. We cannot earn it. However, if we want it, we must believe.
- D. **James 2:14-20** demonstrates that faith, which is faith alone, that is only a mental assent to the facts of Jesus' sacrifice, does no good. Rather, saving faith produces works without which no one will be saved.
- E. **Hebrews 6:1** explains that repentance of our sins goes along with faith. **Luke 24:47** demonstrates that repentance leads to the remission of our sins.
- F. **Romans 10:9-10** demonstrates that confession of our faith is one of the works that faith produces leading to salvation. Consider the example of the Ethiopian Eunuch in **Acts 8:37**.
- G. **Mark 16:16** teaches us that we must not only believe but be baptized in order to be saved. At the close of the first Christian sermon Peter said that repentance and baptism went together to gain the remission of sins (**Acts 2:38**).
- H. But how does all this fit together if forgiveness comes by grace? **Colossians 2:12** demonstrates that the saving work in baptism is not done by us, but by God. There is nothing in baptism that earns salvation. God still has to work and bestow His grace for us to be saved.
- I. Finally, perhaps a biblical story will wrap this picture up nicely showing how all of these keys work together. Consider the children of Israel caught between Pharaoh's army and the Red Sea in **Exodus 14** (which, by the way, Paul claims is an anti-type of our baptism in **I Corinthians 10:2**). The Israelites were trapped. They couldn't possibly gain their own escape or salvation. But then the grace of God was administered. The waters of the Red Sea parted. However, even at that point the Hebrews were not saved. They had to believe God and based on their faith act in accord with His command to walk through the Red Sea on dry ground. Consider all the obstacles to such a course. First, would it really be dry ground or soggy mud that they couldn't possibly get through. Not to mention, how did they know the waters would hold. But believing God, based on Moses' leadership, they acted in their faith and walked through the Red Sea. Once on the other side, God brought the waters down on the Egyptians. Now read the song of rejoicing of Moses and Israel in **Exodus 15**. It was Moses who raised his hands. It was the Israelites who walked through the sea. If they hadn't done these things there would have been no salvation for them. But who is praised and glorified? God. God saved them. God's grace saved them. In like manner, God's grace has been administered. Christ on the Cross is our salvation. If we surrender to Him and are saved by Him, Christ should be glorified, not our actions done in surrender to Him.

Conclusion:

Answering this question is not really any more difficult than answering who cut off Malchus' ear. It simply takes knowing how to go about answering honestly. We must not use these verses to argue against each other. Rather, we must consider how they all go together. There is no sense in arguing the "grace" verses to deny the "faith" verses. We know that they go together. In like manner, there is no sense in arguing either the "grace" or "faith" verses against the "repentance" or "baptism" verses. They also go together. After all, which of these verses is right? All of them. Which ones should we then obey? All of them. Have you obeyed them? If not, why not now?