

WHAT MUST I DO?

Certainly our title is the most vital and timeless of all Bible questions. It is found in some form or another many times in the New Testament. In the various contexts in which it is found, this question is preceded by some kind of instruction from the Lord, one of His apostles, or even all of His apostles (on Pentecost). Interestingly enough, this question was prophesied to be asked in the book of Zechariah, although not in these words. Actually, the **reason** for this question to be asked was prophesied. "In that day, saith Jehovah of hosts, shall ye *invite* every man his neighbor under the vine and under the fig-tree" (Zechariah 3:10). The context of this statement has reference to *The Branch* which the Lord would raise up like unto Joshua, the High Priest. This of course is Christ and the Gospel wherein the Lord said He would remove the iniquity of the land in one day (the death of Christ). This verb *invite* is grammatically found to be an "imperfect" verb. The perfect expresses the "fact", the imperfect adds color and movement by suggesting the "process" preliminary to its completion.

Let us look at a few of the invitations found within the sacred text of the New Testament. Those who responded to the preaching of John the baptizer asked the question we are considering. John told them what to do. "And the multitudes asked him, saying, What then must we do? And he answered and said unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath food, let him do likewise. And there came also publicans to be baptized, and they said unto him, Teacher, what must we do? And he said unto them, Extort no more than that which is appointed you. And soldiers also asked him, saying, And we, what must we do? And he said unto them, Extort from no man by violence, neither accuse any one wrongfully; and be content with your wages" (Luke 3:10-14).

During the time our Master was upon the earth, many asked Him this question and He told them what to do. "They said therefore unto him, What must we do, that we may work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (John 6:28,29). Again, "as he was going forth into the way, there ran one to him, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good save one, even God. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not kill, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor thy father and mother" (Mark 10:17-19). Yet again, "And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and made trial of him, saying,

Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And he said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live" (Luke 10:25-28).

After the cross, this question received a different answer. This answer is vital and applicable to us all living today. Take note, "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do? And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:37-38). Here is another: when the jailer at Philippi was afraid his prisoners had escaped, he was about to kill himself. Paul told him to stop and do himself no harm. Remember what he asked? "and brought them out and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30). He was told, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house" (verse 31). After being taught what to believe (verse 32), "he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and was baptized" (verse 33).

Finally, we have the example of Saul of Tarsus. He asked Jesus this question. He tells us what happened in his own words: "And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do." There, Ananias asked him, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name" (Acts 22:10;16).

Although I hope that all who read this will learn something about the importance of invitations, my aim in this article is to remind those of us who will from time to time have the privilege to offer the Lord's invitation publicly, to do so correctly. Brethren, sometimes, I fear, we do not really invite when we conclude our messages. I have known of a few "invitations" where *"the process preliminary to completion"* was not mentioned, let alone expounded with Scripture. To suggest to the audience to "come if you need, or if we can help you" is much too vague and does not tell the sinner what to do to be saved. There may be one in the audience who has never heard what to do to be saved, or may be uncertain and need a reminder. By all means, brethren, when we "give the invitation," let us **tell** them what to do to be saved.

One Last Sermon

I have been asked in times past what I would say if I knew that I had but one last opportunity to preach. I have always wanted to maintain the attitude of one Richard Bagster who in 1632 said "I preach as never to preach again; as a dying man to dying men."

What then would I tell someone? If I had but one last sermon to preach, I would preach that **man is lost in sin!** The Bible says *"the whole world lieth in the evil one"* (1 John 5:19). Three times in the Old Testament the Bible says *"Jehovah...will by no means clear the guilty"* (Nahum 1:3), and this is why: *"the face of the Lord is upon them that do evil"* (1 Peter 3:12).

I would tell them that **God has provided!** The apostle Paul would teach us *"Blessed is the man to whom, the Lord will not reckon sin"* (Romans 4:8). Why is this? Because of verse seven: *"Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, And whose sins are covered"* (Romans 4:7). How did He do so? *"Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"* (1 Timothy 1:15). What happened when He came? *"He who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel"* (2 Timothy 1:10).

I would tell them that this good news is the Gospel, which is to be **accepted or rejected, as they choose!** We must understand that *"God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, saith the Lord Jehovah; rather that he should return from his way, and live"* (Ezekiel 18:23). Man has always had a choice in his eternal well-being.

I would tell them that there are **conditions to be met!** We must meet the conditions God has set before us: faith, repentance, confession of faith, and baptism to have our sins removed. Then, we must live faithfully in obedience to what He teaches in the New Testament, and worship according to the pattern He has prescribed and set before us.

I would tell them that **only the obedient are saved!** Jesus is the one who *"having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation"* (Hebrews 5:9).

Finally, I would tell them that **the time is now!** *"for he saith, At an acceptable time I hearkened unto thee, And in a day of salvation did I succor thee: behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation"* (2 Corinthians 6:2). What would you tell this person?

RAGER ROAD CHURCH OF CHRIST

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SCHEDULE OF SERVICES:

SUNDAY MORNING	BIBLE STUDY	9:30 A.M.
	WORSHIP	10:30 A.M.
SUNDAY EVENING	WORSHIP	6:00 P.M.
WEDNESDAY	BIBLE STUDY	7:30 P.M.
Preachers:	Robin W. Haley James Grayson	614-751-1082 614-409-0941

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Weekly Budget: \$1360.00

Wednesday's Wisdom:

*"Don't be **Transformer** Christians: changing from the world to Christ to the world again!" James Grayson*

Brother Lloyd Moore passed on last Tuesday evening. Please remember to pray for his family, especially sister **Barbara** at this sad time.

Cheryl wishes to thank the ladies for coming to her home last week to help her prepare herself for the lesson she is to give to the sisters in Ukraine at their Ladies' Seminar next month. She and Robin will be leaving a week from this coming Tuesday, July 7, and will return on July 20.