

# **THE LORD ADDS TO HIS CHURCH**

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## **Submission**

“Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37). “And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?” (Acts 8:36). “And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” (Acts 9:6a). “And I said, What shall I do, Lord?” (Acts 22:10a). “And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16:30).

Each of these Bible references displays individuals who were willing to submit to the instruction from God. The believing multitude assembled on the first Pentecost Day following the resurrection of Christ, the Ethiopian nobleman, Saul of Tarsus, and the Philippian jailer reflect in their questions which bear similarity around the theme of “what must I do to be saved?” the knowledge that their sins had separated them from God, and they were lost without his favor. Observe, also, the willingness on their part to act on what they would learn from God’s representative.

## **Instruction**

The answer of instruction the believing multitude assembled in Jerusalem on Pentecost Day received was “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call” (Acts 2:38-39). The answer the Ethiopian nobleman received was “and Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him” (Acts 8:37-38). The answer Saul of Tarsus received was “and the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do” (Acts 9:6b) “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” (Acts 22:10b). In Damascus Ananias, the preacher, told Saul, “And now why tarriest

thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (v. 16). The answer the Philippian jailer received was “and they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house” (Acts 16:31-34).

These believers were told to repent, confess Christ, and be baptized for the remission of their sins. They approached the instructions from God in anticipation of finding favor with God. And, upon fulfilling the requirements indicated in the instructions they were inducted into the church of Christ.

### **Induction**

Jesus built the church so he would have a place for the saved. He said, “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18). Jesus purchased the church with his own blood. Paul affirmed, “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:28). The New Testament treatise on the church, the book of Ephesians, says, “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it” (Eph. 5:25). All the saved are found to be in the church of Christ. Once again, Ephesians reads, “For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body” (Eph. 5:23).

Induction into the body of Christ or the church of Christ occurs through obedient believers being added to it by the Lord himself. The very day the church began inspiration informs, “Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:47). Some pride themselves in thinking they can join the church by a vote of the members. The church does not belong to the members. They do not say who may belong to it. The Lord who died on Calvary to purchase the church that wears his name is the one to be satisfied with those seeking the favor of God through him. Isaiah wrote of God, “He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities” (Isa. 53:11). When a submissive person has satisfied the divine instructions on becoming a member of the church, the Lord, not man, inducts him into the church of Christ.

## **Questions for Discussion**

1. What were the questioners mentioned at the outset seeking?
2. What attitude or disposition is conveyed by the questions they asked?
3. Do their questions imply that they understood they would be expected to do something?
4. Were they ever told here was nothing for them to do since they were saved by grace?
5. Which one of the instructions is specifically mentioned in the answer to each question?
6. What was the purchase price of the church of Christ?
7. When God saw the travail of whose soul would he be satisfied and justify the obedient believer?
8. Who inducts the submissive, obedient believer into the church of Christ?