

## ***The Greatest Question***

What is the supreme question of the ages?

If there were one question, the answer to which would make you a complete person, and bring you rewards staggering in proportion and blessings beyond your fondest expectation and comprehension -- you would be interested wouldn't you? Of course you would. Everyone who is truly interested in life and success will sit up and take notice of such a proposal.

There is such a question, the answer to which will bring the inquirer the ultimate in blessings. The greatest question ever asked is "What Must I Do To Be Saved?"

Upon the day of Pentecost, the apostle Peter preached Christ to a great multitude whom he charged with crucifying and slaying the blessed Lord (Acts 2:23). "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?" The answer to this all important question was quickly forthcoming: "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 you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

This same question is repeated in the sixteenth chapter of Acts, verse thirty. The question was asked by a startled jailer who had seen wonderful sights and had been shaken by unfamiliar terrors. He cried out to Paul and Silas, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Reading further into the chapter we learn where Paul and Silas answered the question by saying, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house." Following this statement, "they spake the word of the Lord unto him, and 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 immediately."

The Greatest Question implies a (1) difference in being saved and lost, (2) consciousness of being lost, (3) possibility of being saved, (4) willingness to be saved, (5) something that the unsaved individual must do.

The word "must" denotes any sort of necessity -- necessity brought on by circumstances -- necessity in reference to what is required to attain some end -- a necessity of laws, commands, duties, equity -- necessity established by the counsel of God. The central idea in this word is "necessity." It is not synonymous with such words as expedient, should, or advisable. It means absolutely essential. If the word of God reveals a principle or action to be a "must" then it is irrevocable and cannot be altered. Some things are "must" from the very nature of the case and are readily seen. Others are necessary because the counsel and decree of God have established them. When God reveals an action to us, which must be done, we will be held accountable for doing it, whether we see the purpose of it or not. Bickering amounts to a lack of trust.

Now, what must you do to be saved? You must do what those in New Testament times did. Having heard and believed the word (Eph. 1:13) you are to "repent and be baptized for (unto) the remission of your sins" (Acts 2:38). These acts are essential to salvation.

If you have not complied with the essentials contained in the answer to the question, "What must I do to be saved?", you are lost!

**- by Harold Fite**

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## ***Let's Just Do What God Says***

Religious division is a result of failing to do what the Lord says. It reflects an earthly mindset. The apostle Paul told the factious Corinthians: "for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men? For when one says, 'I am of Paul,' and another, 'I am of Apollos,' are you not mere men?" (1 Corinthians 3:3-4).

Look around. Hundreds of denominations exist. They call themselves after men or peculiar doctrines. They engage in a plethora of unauthorized activities because this is what they want. Focus is put upon the social or political. All of this is done supposedly in the name of Christ. However, the Lord says, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophecy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness'" (Matthew 7:21-23).

Religion has become so feeling and emotion oriented that to suggest that there are those who are practicing lawlessness "in the name of Christ" is to be mean spirited and unkind. There is no such thing as false worship in today's society. "Tolerance" for all the various ways of "serving God" is the call of today. Shame on us for suggesting that there is a pattern of authority for the worship and work of God's people. Frankly, with an attitude like this, we might as well write our own Bible.

God's will is unity. We are to endeavor for it by following His plan in the Scriptures (Ephesians 4:1-6). We are not at liberty to toss aside any of the teachings of the Bible. Yet, in order for denominationalism and division to exist, tossing aside what God says is exactly what is being done. It's no wonder that the world has responded with disbelief (see John 17:20-21).

Let's just do what God says. That may sound simplistic, but it is still the key to pleasing God and maintaining unity among believers. Let's be just Christians. It can be done - it must be done if we are to please God. May we all examine ourselves, our practices, and our doctrines, and see if we are following God's will. It's in the Book.

- by *T. Doy Moyer*

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### ***Excited for a Moment***

It is often the case that folks get excited about some new opportunity for work in the kingdom, or some new method of service in the church. That, of course, is a good thing – assuming that the new suggestion is in line with the authority in God's Word. In fact, it is a worthy thing to be looking for new and better ways to spread the Word, reach lost sinners, and simply shine brightly as "lights in the world" (Matthew 5:14-16).

But, some of the same folks who can be so initially thrilled with the possibility and opportunity then seem to lose that zeal just as quickly. These are the ones who push for a new plan, but after it has been undertaken, they show no commitment for following through with the actual work. Unfortunately, this often leads to the complete collapse and failure of the effort. Or, it results in extra work being placed on the backs of those who were already busy and engaged in the Lord's service.

Several warnings are found in the Scriptures about this failure to finish what we start. For example, Jesus spoke of the shame of one "having put his hand to the plow, and looking back" (Luke 9:62). And in the parable of the sower He described those whose hearts are like rocky soil who "receive the word with joy" but quickly "fall away." In contrast, He urged us to be of the sort that "bring forth fruit with patience" (Luke 8:4-15).

Do you have an idea for a new class, a special work, or a unique approach for something that needs to be done? If so, that's great! Dedicated elders, Bible class teachers, and all Christians will be encouraged to hear your suggestion. If it passes the test of Scriptural authority, and if others agree that it is a wise and prudent method to pursue, then all can unite together to accomplish the goal. But realize that, once you have put the idea forward, you must also be willing to see it through.

We need the applied energy of every Christian in planning and fulfilling the work of God. But, on the other hand, we already have too many who start but don't finish important work in God's kingdom. Think!

- by *Greg Gwin*