

*“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God...” (1 Peter 4:11).*

## EXTENDING THE LORD’S INVITATION

by John Isaac Edwards

**Note:** On March 20, 2016, in *The Terre Haute Speaker*, there appeared an article which I wrote entitled, ‘*Extending The Lord’s Invitation.*’ In that article, I gave an example today. It has just been brought to my attention that earlier in that sermon the speaker did make mention of what was said on the day of Pentecost and the Ethiopian. Somehow, regrettably, I missed that part. Here is the quote: “*Maybe it is even tonight that you need to begin your walk with Christ. Would you give your life to him? What He’s asked, and what they said on the day of Pentecost, is to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins might be washed away. You can begin that walk with Christ. We see that those who gladly received His word were baptized. They began that walk. Remember the Ethiopian man, when he was baptized, he went on his way rejoicing. He began that walk. If you need to do that, now is the time! There’s nothing else more important!*” I appreciate this being brought to my attention, and wanted to make proper correction. It is certainly not my intention to misrepresent anyone or anything. I offer the article here again, without the example (though many examples could be inserted as a lack of distinctive preaching, failure to give the gospel plan of salvation and extend the Lord’s invitation is becoming more and more common in some places). Yet, the point may be made without the example.

There was a time when you could attend the services of churches of Christ and expect to hear the gospel plan of salvation given and the Lord’s invitation extended. Where have those days gone? Now, it is becoming too common for folks to visit churches of Christ and leave without knowing what to do to be saved and without opportunity given for them to obey the gospel!

### THE PENTECOST MODEL

We have an excellent model of the kind of preaching that we need to be doing and demanding in the record of Peter’s sermon on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:22-40). It was Christ-centered, Scripture-filled, and heart-pricking! Those in the audience cried out, “*Men and brethren, what shall we do?*” (Acts 2:37). Much of the preaching that is done today would not disturb anyone enough to cause them to ask such a question. And they did

not leave without knowing they needed to do something, what they needed to do, without it being made clear why they needed to do it, or without opportunity granted for them to do it! “*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...And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added about three thousand souls*” (Acts 2:38-41).

Christ is “*...the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him*” (Heb. 5:9). Let’s give folks opportunity to obey the Lord and be specific in letting them know what they must do to have their sins forgiven. Otherwise, we are doing those in

our audience a real disservice! We need the kind of preaching that calls for men and women to make an immediate decision for the Lord. “*Who is on the Lord’s side? let him come unto me...*” (Exodus 32:26) was the call of Moses. The cry of Joshua was, “*...choose you this day whom ye will serve...*” (Joshua 24:15). The exhortation and opportunity to obey should always accompany gospel preaching! Even those who teach error give folks occasion to obey error. Why not present folks with the privilege of “*...obeying the truth...*” (1 Pet. 1:22)? The Lord said, “*Come unto me...*” (Mt. 11:28). The book of God closes with the invitation, “*And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely*” (Revelation 22:17). Let it be heard today!

# IF SAVED ON THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS

by John Isaac Edwards

Some have been made to believe that Saul of Tarsus was saved on the road to Damascus, before and without water baptism. If saved on the road to Damascus, then:

**1) SAVED BEFORE AND WITHOUT BEING TOLD WHAT TO DO.** When Saul asked, “*Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?*”, the Lord said unto him, “*Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do*” (Acts 9:6). So, if saved on the way to Damascus, Saul must have been saved before he was even told what to do!

**2) SAVED BEFORE AND WITHOUT FAITH.** It wasn’t until Saul was in Damascus that he heard Ananias say unto him, “*And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord*” (Acts 22:16). Since “*...faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*” (Rom. 10:17), if Saul was saved before he heard what to do, then he must have been saved without faith!

**3) SAVED WITHOUT PLEASING OR COMING TO GOD.** Hebrews 11:6 says, “*But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that*

*cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*” If saved without faith, then saved without pleasing or coming to God!

**4) SAVED WITHOUT OBEDIENCE.** Do you believe an individual will be saved from their sins without obeying the Lord? That’s the consequence, if Saul was saved on the road to Damascus. Matthew 7:21; Luke 6:46; Hebrews 5:9; Revelation 22:14 and a host of other passages make it clear that we must do what the Lord says to be saved. Baptism is an act of obedience required by the Lord (Mk. 16:16; Rom. 6:3-4, 17-18; Acts 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21).

**5) SAVED IN HIS SINS.** In the city Saul was told by Ananias, “*... arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins...*” (Acts 22:16). The washing away of sins comes after baptism. Thus, if saved on the road, before and without baptism, then he must have been saved in his sins!

**6) SAVED WITHOUT CALLING ON THE NAME OF THE LORD.** Acts 22:16 connects calling on the name of the Lord with baptism. Paul taught, “*For whosoever shall call*

*upon the name of the Lord shall be saved*” (Rom. 10:13). This involves hearing, believing, and obeying gospel preaching (Rom. 10:13-17; 1 Cor. 1:21). Was Saul saved without calling on the name of the Lord?

**7) SAVED WITHOUT KNOWING IT.** If Saul was saved on the road to Damascus, he must not have known it for he was led by the hand into Damascus and was “*...three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink*” (Acts 9:8-9). This is the most miserable saved person I’ve read about. Contrast this with the Ethiopian who “*...went on his way rejoicing*” (Acts 8:39) and the jailor who “*...set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house*” (Acts 16:34). It is after Saul “*...arose, and was baptized*” (thus did what he was told) that he “*...received meat...was strengthened...And straightway preached Christ in the synagogues...*” (Acts 9:18-20).

This should help us realize that we’re not saved before and without water baptism. Jesus said, “*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned*” (Mk. 16:16). “*And now why tarriest thou?...*” (Acts 22:16).

**The Terre Haute **SPEAKER**** is published weekly by the church of Christ at Terre Haute, Indiana.

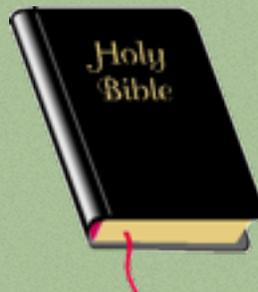
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