

Episode #1118 Acts 2 Part 7-What Shall We Do?

I. Acts is unique in the New Testament. Rather than the ministry of Jesus Christ on earth, it focuses on what came after, when the Lord had ascended back into heaven. The Lord left His disciples with many commands to carry out, and Acts tells us how they did them.

II. We were discussing the miraculous events at Pentecost in Acts 2. Peter had finished his explanation of Psalm 16:8-11, showing that David was not speaking of himself, but of his descendant, the Messiah. This was Jesus, whom they had crucified, but God had raised from the dead. Peter now publicly proclaims to Israel what was never proclaimed during the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus: that He was both Lord and Christ.

III. The peoples' response to Peter's address.

- A. Verse 37. God's message had hit the mark, and found its intended response in the hearts of these men. The Old Testament told them what would happen to them if they did not listen to the One God sent; Deuteronomy 18:18-19, for example. Peter in Acts 3:23 defines what "require it of him" means. They displayed the right attitude: they asked what they should do. This is what we need to ask of God when under conviction. Too many roll up their sleeves and start doing what they think they should do, instead of asking God what they should do.
- B. Verse 38. They should repent.
 - 1. People think repentance means Godly sorrow. II Corinthians 7:10 shows this is not true, for Godly sorrow cannot bring Godly sorrow.
 - 2. Repent is the Greek *metanoeo* the verb related to *metanoia* we talked about in Acts 1:5. *Meta* means after, *noeo* means be minded.
 - 3. They should have the aftermind. He wanted them to make up their mind right at that point that they would submit themselves to God, whatever He asked of them afterward.
- C. They should be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.
 - 1. This does not mean a water ceremony where someone says over you, "I baptize you in the name of Jesus Christ."
 - 2. Baptism is *baptismos*, means an identification, one that involves participation, and that results in a merger. Peter was demanding that these people publicly identify themselves with Jesus Christ, be considered merged with Him, and in full fellowship with others who were as well.
 - 3. John 12:42-43. Some had been secret believers in time past. They could be that no longer.
 - 4. Matthew 10:32-33. During Christ's earthly ministry, God had not challenged these "secret believers." Yet now, if these men wish to cast in their lot with the Lord Jesus Christ, then they must be publicly identified with Him. This has nothing to do with them doing a water ceremony.
- D. This will be "for the remission of sins."
 - 1. For should be into or "with a view to."
 - 2. He did not mean a water ceremony would wash away their sins. Hebrews 9:22 tells us only blood can remit sins.
 - 3. When they identified themselves with Jesus Christ, this would be with a view to Him applying His blood to them and washing away their sins.
- E. Finally, they will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

1. Greek *tou hagio pneumatos*, “the Holy Spirit,” means they would receive the Person of the Holy Spirit’s gift.
 2. This was the gift of power that the Lord Jesus Christ had promised to all who believed in Mark 16:17-18.
- F. Verse 39. By “you,” Peter meant those to whom he was talking, verse 14, “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem,” and verse 22, “Men of Israel.” Who are those who are afar off? Daniel 9:7. Three groups listed, just like in Acts 2:39. The third is all Israel, those near and those far off in all countries to which the Lord had driven them. These were those “afar off” here. Peter’s message was entirely to Israelites. The message was to the ones God would call. In the Acts period, the promise of salvation went out to every single Israelite. We will see it go to all three of these groups as we continue through Acts.
- G. Verse 40. It is generally believed that a generation is the group of people living on earth of a similar age at the same time: our generation, and our parents’ generation, our children’s generation, etc. There is no possible way that anyone can save himself from the generation in which he lives, becoming a generation older or younger. Greek is *genea*, means “generation,” but it does not always match with our usual use of this word in English. The word generation is one of the family of words from “to generate.” Many things can be generated: excitement, power, etc. The Jews of that day were generated by the traditions and teachings of their fathers, the prejudices of their culture, and the sin and death which work in all men. If they would believe in Christ, they could save themselves from that perverse generation that was going to suffer God’s wrath. Luke 11:49-51. They could not save themselves from the age in which they were born. They could save themselves from that wicked generation that rejected Christ, however.
- H. Verse 41. All in the crowd did not believe, but about three thousand of them did, which must have been a significant percentage. Those who received the word were baptized. Most immediately assume that a water ritual is referred to. The Greek *baptismos* is not a water ritual, but an identification. It would have been very difficult to find enough water in Jerusalem to perform a ritual upon three thousand people. Those who received the word were identified with Jesus Christ. The apostles had the right to make such an identification. The number of believers went from 120 to 3,120. Remember, though, that these who believed were not God-rejecting pagans before, but were “devout” (verse 5) Israelites. They were in God’s temple worshiping Him. Now, they realized and accepted the truth that the rejected Jesus of Nazareth was in fact the One God sent to be their Savior. “Souls” here just means “people.”
- IV. Conclusion: The people realized their sin when their leaders crucified Christ, and wanted to know what to do. Peter’s answer was to submit, to be identified with Jesus Christ with a view to His blood taking away their sins, and receive the promised gift of the Holy Spirit. Do we submit to God? Are we identified with Christ? Has His blood washed away our sins? I pray so.