

THE BOOK OF ACTS | GOD'S REVELATION OF TRANSITION

SESSION 9: ACTS 2:39-43

ACTS 2:37-47 | THE PENTECOSTAL RESPONSE

- *Italicized material included on Session 8*
- Verse 37 –
 - *Peter's sermon has been:*
 - *What took place in the upper room was the beginning of prophetic fulfillment, and the completion of that fulfillment is not good (vv. 15-21)*
 - *Jesus is Israel's Messiah (vv. 22-35)*
 - *His miracles prove this (v. 22)*
 - *His resurrection proves this (vv. 23-32)*
 - *His ascension proves this (vv. 33-35)*
 - *Jesus is Lord and Christ.*
 - *This being true, **they were pricked in the heart** and wanted to know, **what shall we do?***
 - *Peter's message does NOT:*
 - *Present Jesus as personal savior.*
 - *Say a single word about forgiveness of sins through the blood of Christ.*
 - *Nothing about God not counting their sins against them.*
 - *The only question remains: will Peter's response to their question rectify these issues?*
- Verse 38 –
 - *Peter's response is clear (and clearly disturbing to the typical church view).*
 - *He says nothing about belief/faith.*
 - *He only gives a works answer.*
 - *He promises **the gift of the Holy Ghost** and not "forgiveness from your sins."*
 - *Questions the typical view should answer:*
 - *Would this answer be appropriate for a Christian witness today? Why not?*
 - *Is any evangelistic message ever preached from these verses? Why not?*
 - *Can we really attribute Peter's poor answer to an assumption that "the audience already knew all these things?" Why not? (To do so, we have to make it up, for no such idea comes from the text).*
- Verse 39 –
 - **The promise is the promise of the Holy Ghost** (v. 33) which is **of the Father** (v. 33).
 - Because of the very close wording to Old Testament passages, **the promise** can be associated with the New Covenant promised to Israel.
 - Isaiah 44:3 speaks of God's Spirit being poured out **upon thine offspring**.
 - Isaiah 54:13 promises a day of great peace for **thy children**.
 - Jeremiah 32:30 speaks of the blessing of the New Covenant on the children.
 - Ezekiel 37:25 speaks of blessings for **their children, and their children's children forever**.
 - Joel 2:28 speaks of the blessing on **your sons and your daughters**.
 - Isaiah 59:19 speaks of the New Covenant era blessing stretching from the east to the west.
 - Joel 2:32 speaks of the remnant as those **whom the Lord shall call**.
 - There are so many similarities in wording that it would be hard to argue that Peter did not have the New Covenant in mind.

- Does this mean that the New Covenant had begun? Absolutely not! Peter was telling the nation that they could fulfill the requirements for the establishment of the New Covenant and it COULD begin.
- Verse 40 –
 - I would love to know the **many other words** by which Peter did **testify and exhort**. I can speculate, but the fact is that we do not know, and furthermore that the recorded words are sufficient for us to understand the message.
 - Though the KJV says **save yourselves**, the verb is in the passive tense, thus would be better translated *be saved* (as in Young's, NKJV, and most other translations). Research as to why KJV went with the active would be a worthy endeavor (ESV uses the same words as the KJV. The Geneva Bible and the Tyndale Bible also use the active. Therefore, there must be some reason (beyond simple error) why so many translations would make such a decision).
 - This verse is a narrative comment and gives further proof that Peter was expecting *judgment and war* to fall upon the nation, in fulfillment of the prophetic plan.
- Verse 41 –
 - There were 3,000 who were **added unto them** (either to the 12 Apostles or the 120).
 - This does not say that 3,000 received personal salvation, by grace through faith.
 - Could 3,000 become "Christians" in the modern sense from this sermon?
 - Could the material not contained in the recorded portion of the sermon have been that which spoke of faith? If so, why would that portion not have been recorded, when the matters of grace and faith are central to salvation as we know it?
 - It is best to recognize that there were 3,000 who became part of Peter's Kingdom-based assembly. These 3,000 believed that Jesus was the Jewish Messiah and had been raised from the dead. They were willing to repent of their sins and be baptized, in preparation for the coming day of Judgment, and thus be saved **from this untoward generation** (v. 40).
 - How is it that 3,000 **were baptized...the same day**? Where were they baptized? Who baptized them? Where did the water come from? These questions become almost impossible if you assume that Baptism is a Christian ritual. In actuality, these 3,000 were not "becoming Christians" nor were they performing a Christian ritual. The 3,000 were Jews at the end of the day as well as at the beginning. The 3,000 were immersed into the *mikvah* (ceremonial immersion pool).
 - How did *baptism* become an exclusively Christian term? Most likely Jerome is the culprit, as he chose to transliterate rather than translate the word, and every English translation has followed his lead.
- Verse 42 –
 - Beginning on this day there is clearly *something* that did not exist the day before: a group of Jews that was baptized, had **the gift of the Holy Ghost** (v. 38), and were aligning themselves with **the apostles' doctrine**.
 - While this may be similar to the church as we know it today, a careful study of this group (as we shall see) will display too many differences with the church of today to call this Acts 2 group the first church, or the day of Pentecost the birth of the church. (Recommendation: *The Church of the New Testament* by James Willingham).
 - It is noteworthy that those who use Acts 2:42 as the basis for the purpose of the church seem to ignore verses 43-45.
- Verse 43 –
 - The **wonders and signs were done by the apostles**. Nowhere in the book of Acts will we see the miraculous performed by anyone other than the Apostles or their emissaries.