

THE BOOK OF ACTS | GOD'S REVELATION OF TRANSITION

SESSION 10: ACTS 2:42-3:11

ACTS 2:37-47 | THE PENTECOSTAL RESPONSE

- Verses 37-41 included on session 9
- 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.
- Verses 44-45 –
 - The clarity of this verse is startling. Notice **all that believed...all things...to all...as every**. That is, everybody participated, nobody was left out, this was not optional. Here is one of many typical commentaries: *"The passage does not mean that they sold all their possessions, or that they relinquished their title to all their property, but that they so far regarded all as common as to be willing to part with it if it was needful to supply the wants of the others."*¹
 - Compare Acts 4:32 for confirmation that *all* means *all*. Why do so many work so hard to deny the clarity of this verse? *Because it does not fit their assumptions*.
 - Why did they do this? Was it a whim? A bad idea? Or was it because they were fully expecting the Kingdom, which came with certain economic ideas? See Matthew 19:23-24, 29 - maybe they were just taking Jesus literally!
- Verse 46 –
 - To continue **in the temple** required obedience to temple rules, including the offering of sacrifices. Even if this were not the case, it requires an implicit endorsement of temple activities (which centered around sacrifice).
 - It is clear that though a new *assembly* had been born, a new *dispensation* had not.
- Verse 47 –
 - The fact that they were **having favour with all the people** is astonishing (compared to earlier in the chapter when they were accused of being drunk). It tells us that some time had passed in these verses which share a summary of their activity. It also tells us that they were living in harmony with the Jewish law.

¹ Albert Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament: Acts*, ed. Robert Frew (London: Blackie & Son, 1884–1885), 58.

- The Lord added to the *assembly*, though translated **church**.
 - The Greek word ἐκκλησία [ekklesia] did not take on an exclusively religious/Christian tone until hundreds of years after Luke wrote Acts.
 - By the simple understanding of history, Luke could not have meant "church" in the modern sense.
- **Such as should be saved** - this English phraseology sounds very Calvinistic. The Greek simply says "those who were being saved."
- What were they being saved from? The context of the passage is in verse 40, which instructs them to **save yourselves from this untoward generation**. To assume an age-of-grace salvation is more than the passage states.

ACTS 3:1-11 | MIRACLE AT THE TEMPLE

- Verse 1 –
 - The **hour of prayer** at about 3:00 PM (**the ninth hour**) involved a lamb sacrifice and several other grain and drink offerings (Ex. 29:39).
 - Peter's presence was, at minimum, an implicit compliance in this sacrifice.
- Verses 2-3 –
 - Peter was **about to go into the temple** through the **gate...which is called Beautiful**. Here, the lame man would **ask alms of them that entered into the temple**.
 - It is believed that the Beautiful gate was between the Court of the Gentiles and the Court of the Jews.
- Verse 4 –
 - The Greek word translated **fastening his eyes** is ἀτενίζω [atenizo], from which we get *attention* (by way of Latin), the word basically means "not to look beyond."
- Verses 5-8 –
 - This is an undeniable miracle and clear manifestation of the Holy Ghost.
 - It was the beginning of many miracles, all similar in scope to those of the Messiah, and almost all at the hands of Peter, who had been given the "keys to the Kingdom."
 - Just like God wanted to give unmistakable evidence that Jesus was Messiah, He also wanted to give unmistakable evidence that the Holy Ghost had descended and thus the time to prepare for the Kingdom was immediate.
 - It would be entirely false to build a miracle working doctrine out of this passage. Even without a dispensational change, there is no evidence that anyone other than Apostles performed these miracles.
 - An often-used preacher line is "The church can no longer say, "Silver and gold have I none," and neither can it say, "rise up and walk." The implication is that church wealth has hindered the church's miracle working ability by diminishing its reliance on God. Such verbiage "preaches" but is not true. The reason the church does not perform miracles is because manifestation gifts belong to the "age of the Kingdom offer."
 - It is worth noting that Peter did presumably have access to silver and gold, as the previous chapter proves. It is likely that 1) Peter had none with him, and 2) Peter was not the treasurer.
- Verses 9-11 –
 - The miracle (as intended) brought amazement to the people and built a ready-to-listen crowd for Peter's second sermon.