

# Acts 2:37-47

## Birth of the Church

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# Shot through the heart

*37 Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?”*

- What is *this*?
  - Peter’s message about Christ
  - *God has made Him both Lord and Christ* – verse 36
- *Pierced through the heart* – to be greatly pained or deeply moved<sup>1</sup>
  - “Seriously affected in their most cognitive capacities”<sup>2</sup>
  - See John 16:8-11
- *What shall we do* – the gospel message provoked a response
  - See also Acts 16:30 – the Philippian jailer
  - They look to the apostles for answers

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<sup>1</sup>definitions, unless otherwise noted, come from Zodhiates

<sup>2</sup>Merryman

## Change your mind

*38a Peter said to them, “**Repent**, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

- *Repent* – pious sorrow for unbelief and sin and a turning from them unto God and the gospel of Christ
  - Second person plural, aorist tense, active voice, imperative mode
    - *You [plural], all of you, must repent*<sup>3</sup>
    - Aorist – signifies the need for and fact of decisive action
    - Active – the responsibility to act was their own
    - Imperative – they are commanded to repent
  - Previous calls to repentance – Matthew 3:2 & 4:17
  - More calls to repentance – Acts 3:19; 5:31; 8:22; 11:18; 13:24; 17:30; 19:4; 20:21; 26:20

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<sup>3</sup>all these come from Merryman

## Garbage in (the water)– garbage out (of the water)

*38a Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins;*

- *Baptized* – to baptize or immerse in or wash with water in token of purification from sin and spiritual pollution
  - third person, singular, aorist tense, passive voice, subjunctive mode
    - Speaking to individual believers
    - “a construction in koine Greek identified as permissive imperative, hence *Let each...be baptized*”<sup>4</sup>
- Why was baptism important specifically for these believers?
  - Identification with Jesus Christ
    - This would lead to almost certain persecution (Acts 22:19)
    - Peter was asking them to identify with the man *they* just crucified

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<sup>4</sup>Merryman

## Two key prepositions, the first

*38a Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized **in** the name of Jesus Christ **for** the forgiveness of your sins;*

- *In* – Greek word is *epi*
  - Means upon, resting upon, or upon the ground of, or upon the authority of.<sup>5</sup>
  - Uses of this word throughout acts:
    - Acts 2:21 – call **upon** the name of the Lord
    - Acts 9:42 – many believed **in** the Lord
    - Acts 11:17 – God gave to them the same gift..after believing **in** the Lord Jesus Christ
    - Acts 16:31 – Believe **in** the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved
    - Acts 22:19 – I used to imprison and beat those who believed **in**<sup>6</sup> You

<sup>5</sup>all this comes from Merryman – see the supplement

<sup>6</sup>the last three “in’s” are translated “on” in the KJV

## Two key prepositions, the second

*38a Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized **in** the name of Jesus Christ **for** the forgiveness of your sins;*

- *for* – Greek word is *eis*
  - Biblical usage – into, unto, to, towards, for, among
  - “The usual meaning is ‘for’ designating aim or purpose.”<sup>7</sup>
  - “However it clearly means ‘because of’ in some passages.”
    - See Matthew 3:11; 12:14; Mark 1:4
  - Wuest: *let each one of you be baptized upon the ground of your confession of belief in the sum total of all that Jesus Christ is in His glorious Person, this baptismal testimony being in relation to the fact that your sins have been put away*
  - This preposition can be grammatically connected to *Repent*<sup>8</sup>
- How would Peter’s listeners have understood this passage?

<sup>7</sup>this and the next quote comes from Constable

<sup>8</sup>McCalley

# The name of Jesus

*38 Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in **the name of Jesus Christ** for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

- The key is belief in the name of Jesus Christ
- Peter is consistent in this message
  - Acts 2:22 – *everyone who calls on **the name of the Lord** will be saved.*
  - Acts 2:36 – *God has made Him both **Lord and Christ***
  - Acts 4:12 – *there is **no other name** under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.*
  - Acts 10:43 – ***through His name** everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.*
- *Repent (believe)...[then] you will receive*
  - Acts 10:44-48 – Gentiles receive the spirit, then are baptized

# A gift for all

*38b and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.”*

- Promise of the Holy Spirit
  - References to the promise of the Holy Spirit – 1:4-5 & 1:8
  - Fulfillment of that promise – 2:1-4
- Recipients of that promise
  - All the believers at this point were Jews
  - Peter (under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit) says this promise is to “[them] and [their] children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.”
    - *Far off* indicates distance, not time
  - Did Peter understand what he was saying?
    - See his reluctance to take the gospel to Gentiles in Acts 10
  - Jesus calls all men to himself – see 2:21



# Be safe

*40 And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation!"*

- Peter's actions:
  - *solemnly testified* – to bear witness, testify earnestly or repeatedly, or to charge as it were before witnesses
  - *kept on exhorting* – to call upon someone to do something, to exhort, admonish<sup>9</sup>
  - Emphasis here is on a repeated continual action
- Peter's words:
  - *saved* – to save and (by implication) to give eternal life
    - Notice the passive voice
  - Context is clear – they are to repent, i.e. turn to Christ

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<sup>9</sup>used at least 21 other times in the book of Acts

# Church planting

*41 So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.  
42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.*

- Who was the Church?
  - *those who had received [Peter's] word*
    - Implication is they repented and believed on Jesus<sup>10</sup>
  - *were baptized*
    - Predicated on them repenting and believing
  - Roughly 3000
- What did they do?
  - The fruit of the Spirit is almost immediately evident

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<sup>10</sup>See Luke 8:40 for another use of this word

# Community

41 *So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.*

42 *They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.*

- What was their focus?
  - *apostles' teaching* – i.e. doctrine
    - the Apostles had complete doctrinal authority at this time
    - This is singular – **the** doctrine
  - *fellowship* – participation, fellowship, communion
    - This also is singular – **the** fellowship
    - This was a distinctive community
  - *breaking of bread* – observance of the Lord's table
    - See also Acts 20:7,11 & 1 Corinthians 10:16
  - *prayers*
    - A priority for the early saints
    - See 1:14, 24

## Acts 2:43-47 (NASB)

*43 Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. 44 And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; 45 and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. 46 Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.*

# One another

- We see the amazing response of a people filled with the Holy Spirit
- Summary of verses 43 - 47a
  - *sense of awe* – people were noticing what God was doing
  - *wonders and signs* – God spread the early church with extraordinary measures
  - *all things in common* – not necessarily communal living, but certainly living in unity
  - *selling...sharing...as anyone might have need* – this is how God provides for his church
  - *continuing with one mind* – they were united around **the** doctrine
  - *sincerity and gladness of heart* – they are no longer their own
- *And the Lord was adding to their number*
  - Some texts have *ekklesia* (church) instead of *autos* (number)
- These verses summarize what happened over an extended period of time

Jesus said: You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you;  
and you will be my witnesses... Acts 1:8

Holy Spirit comes at Pentecost. Acts 2

People present prophesy  
in different languages

Peter proclaims a message

Declare God's mighty acts. 2:11  
Peter is  
"prophesying"

Old Testament  
Hopes

God would pour his Holy Spirit  
on all his people - Joel 2

King David looked forward to a king  
who wouldn't remain dead - Psalm 16.

God's king would sit at God's hand  
and rule the universe - Psalm 110.

Apostles are  
Eyewitnesses

The exalted Lord Jesus has poured  
out what you now see and hear. 2:33

David is dead, Jesus isn't.

Jesus has been raised from the dead  
and exalted to God's right hand as King

Jesus is Lord and Christ - Acts 2:26

Repent and turn to Jesus as Lord

Be baptised in Jesus' name, for  
the forgiveness of sins. 2:38

Join Jesus' new community.  
2:42-47

Structure of Acts 2, Wayne Schuller, May 2004, wayne@schuller.it.au

## Acts 2:37-41 (Wuest)

*Now, having heard this, they were stung to the heart with poignant sorrow. And they said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, What shall we do, men, brothers? And Peter said to them, Have a change of mind, that change of mind being accompanied by abhorrence of and sorrow for your deed, and let each one of you be baptized upon the ground of your confession of belief in the sum total of all that Jesus Christ is in His glorious Person, this baptismal testimony being in relation to the fact that your sins have been put away, and you shall receive the gratuitous gift of the Holy Spirit, for to you is the promise and to your children and to all who are at a distance, as many as the Lord our God shall with a divine summons call to himself. And with many other words he solemnly affirmed, and kept on exhorting them, saying, Be saved from this perverse generation. Then those who received his word with approval were immersed. And there were added to their number on that day about three thousand souls.*

## Acts 2:42-47 (Wuest)

*And they were giving constant attention to the teaching of the apostles and to that which they held in common with them, and to the breaking of the bread and to the gatherings where prayers to God were offered. And a reverential fear came upon every soul. And many miracles that excited amazement and attesting miracles were performed by the apostles. And all those who believed were gathered together as a unit and were holding all things in joint-participation, and were selling their houses and lands and other possessions and kept on distributing them to all, according as anyone was having a need. And daily they continued to remain in the temple, in perfect unanimity, breaking bread at home, partaking of food together in gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having the good will of the people. And the Lord kept on adding to them daily those who were being saved.*