

- A Study in Acts -

Chapter Two – Coming of Power and the First Gospel Sermon

ACTS 2:37-39:

In our last lesson, we concluded the sermon of the Apostles of Christ (2:22-36). In review:

Title – Jesus of Nazareth (Vs.22)

1st Point – A Man attested by God to you! (Vs. 22)

2nd Point – You have taken by Lawless Hands and Crucified! (Vs.23)

3rd Point – God has Raised Him up! (Vs. 24-35)

4th Point – God has made Him both Lord and Christ! (Vs. 36)

In this lesson we want to look at the results of this powerful preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Let us remember that the goal of the preaching of Jesus Christ is to effect change in the hearts of men. Here it is to effect change specifically in those who up to this point have rejected Jesus as the Messiah. These were those whom He has come to directly, prior to His ascension, to prepare for the kingdom of God (the Jews), note:

Matthew 15:24 “But He answered and said, “I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

John 1:11 “He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.”

Until Peter and the eleven stand up and begin to preach, the Jews assembled here this day of Pentecost were only amazed and confused concerning the events leading up to this. The lesson preached on this day was to give meaning to these events and cause the desired change. The first visible sign of the success of this preaching is found in our opening text!

Text #1:

Acts 2:37 “Now when they heard *this*, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?”

Heard This: This is given to show the complete work of this sermon in conclusion. It also stands to exemplify the words of the Apostle Paul:

Romans 10:17 “So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

Cut to the Heart: Luke traces the convicting work of the Gospel in the hearts of those who truly hear. The use of this terminology by Luke is given to show an acute grief in their hearts by the realized guilt of having the blood of the Messiah on their hands.

What Shall We Do? In this exclamation, they have tactically confessed their belief of what Peter and the eleven have spoken (once again it should be recognized that their question to the group of the Apostles shows they had all participated in this preaching). Due to the remorse and guilt, they are pricked to ask for the solution to their heartache.

As this is the first case of the preaching of the Gospel of Christ as King on His throne, it is by being the first, a situation of precedence (The fact, state, or right of preceding; priority). As such, it stands as testimony for all cases of belief in the Gospel of Christ from this day forward. Not only would it be the first step in the response that Jesus would state to His disciples would come from their preaching, it is also associated with what they will be told is the next step. In other words, if belief in Jesus as the Christ is sufficient, then the question is without significance; however, not only is the question necessary, but so is obedience to the response.

Text #2:

Acts 2:38-39 “Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”

See also: **Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:47.**

As Jesus commissioned His chosen and prepared them for the work that has begun this Day of Pentecost; He instructed that repentance and baptism would be commanded! It was as a direct command, an order of authority that must be obeyed. Here, the Apostles of Jesus are fulfilling their role in revealing this command. In **verse 41**, we will see the approved example that would follow this command; however, for the moment let us notice the [precedence] once again being established here.

Repentance: To change one’s mind and purpose. Always given in the instruction of the Gospel to completely change from a detrimental course to a beneficial one – see: **Acts 17:30; 26:18.**

Baptized: From the Greek, ‘*Baptisma*’, this is consisting of the process of immersion, submersion, and emergence. In **Acts 8:38**, we learn beyond doubt that submersion is in water. It is inferred in **Romans 6:3-4**, that baptism is a burial, which supports the complete immersion of believing individuals. It is also inferred by Peter that this is not a bath (as in ceremonial washing), but the answer of a good conscience to God (submission in faith – **1 Peter 3:21**).

As a point of fact: Sprinkling did not come about for hundreds of years after this command was given. One cannot be immersed by sprinkling or even be poured on! It was given as a demonstration of submission in faith to the Gospel’s commands and men have no authority or right to change it!

In the Name of Jesus Christ: This distinction is given to establish a difference from the baptism of John the Baptist (see also: **Acts 19:4**), and the baptism of the Holy Spirit promised to the Apostles only – **Acts 1:4-5**. Since there will be only one with preeminence (**Colossians 1:18**), there will be only one baptism as well (**Ephesians 4:5**).

Remission of Sins: Baptism is not a random act of law as some suggest, it is a purposeful removal, through submission, of that which keeps God from being able to recognize us as His children (**1 John 1:5**). The forgiveness of sins is the ultimate goal of the process of salvation. This is the process by which we emerge from the watery grave of baptism as new creatures and having the newness of life (**Romans 6:3-4**).

Remission is from the Greek, ‘*Aphesis*’ and is a dismissal, or release from the item of attachment. Since sin is lawlessness (**1 John 3:4**), all sin is the avoidance of the commands of God. As all are guilty of this (**Romans 3:23**), the Gospel leads one to that which he needs more than anything else in order to begin the process of righteousness (to be right with God).

Gift of the Holy Spirit: This could be one of two things, either the Holy Spirit as a gift, or a gift the Spirit gives.

If the first, we cannot understand it as a miraculous measure, for in the study of this letter, we will see that most believers will not receive a miraculous measure of the Spirit, and God shows no partiality – **Acts 10:34; Romans 2:11; Galatians 2:6; Ephesians 6:9; Colossians 3:25; 1 Peter 1:17**. We will see spiritual gifts given by the Spirit to a few to benefit the whole in the early church until the coming of the perfectly given written word – **Acts 8:14-17; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 29-31, 13:8-13**.

If the latter, it is the blessings ‘**IN**’ Christ (**Ephesians 1:3-14** – by believing the Gospel then being sealed with the Spirit) as rendered by the continued relationship with God through Christ, in the Spirit of adoption (**Romans 8:14-17**), by the implanting of the word as our guide to righteousness (**James 1:21**). This will also be demonstrated in those who will obey and be baptized as they will continue in the doctrine of the Apostles, which has been manifested through them by the Apostolic measure of the Spirit (**John 16:13**).

The Promise: The promise of blessing was through the promise given to Abraham that in his seed all men would be blessed (**Genesis 12:3**). The seed of promise was the Messiah, the Christ (**Galatians 3:15-18**). This is why we call it the “**Great Promise**”; see also: **Genesis 18:18; 22:18; 26:4-5; 28:14**.

It is here that we have blessing defined as remission of sins through baptism by the authority of Jesus Christ. It is given as promised to the descendants of Abraham (the Jews), and to those “**afar off**”; a reference to the Gentiles that will receive the calling of God through the Gospel (**2 Thessalonians 2:14**) first in **chapter 10** of Acts.

James 1:18 “Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.”