

ACTS

Union Grove Bible Institute

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Acts 2:38-47

Acts 2:38–39

Peter's answer was forthright. First they were to **repent**. This verb (*metanoēsate*) means “change your outlook,” or “have a change of heart; reverse the direction of your life.” This obviously results in a change of conduct, but the emphasis is on the mind or outlook. The Jews had rejected Jesus; now they were to trust in Him. Repentance was repeatedly part of the apostles' message in Acts (v. 38; 3:19; 5:31; 8:22; 11:18; 13:24; 17:30; 19:4; 20:21; 26:20).

A problem revolves around the command “**be baptized**” and its connection with the remainder of 2:38. There are several views:

(1) One is that both repentance and baptism result in remission of sins. In this view, baptism is essential for salvation. The problem with this interpretation is that elsewhere in Scripture forgiveness of sins is based on faith alone (John 3:16, 36; Rom. 4:1–17; 11:6; Gal. 3:8–9; Eph. 2:8–9; etc.). Furthermore

Peter, the same speaker, later promised forgiveness of sins on the basis of faith alone (Acts 5:31; 10:43; 13:38; 26:18).

(2) A second interpretation translates 2:38, “Be baptized ... **on the basis of – BECAUSE of** the remission of your sins.” The preposition used here is *eis* which, with the accusative case, may mean “on account of, on the basis of.” It is used in this way in Matthew 3:11; 12:41; and Mark 1:4. Though it is possible for this construction to mean “on the basis of,” this is not its normal meaning; *eis* with the accusative case usually describes purpose or direction.

(3) A third view takes the clause **and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ** as parenthetical. Several factors support this interpretation:

(a) The verb makes a distinction between singular and plural verbs and nouns. The verb “repent” is plural and so is the pronoun “your” in the clause **so that your sins may be forgiven** (lit., “unto the remission of your sins,” *eis aphaesin tōn hamartiōn hymōn*). Therefore the verb “repent” must go with the purpose of forgiveness of sins. On the other hand the imperative “be baptized” is singular, setting it off from the rest of the sentence.

(b) This concept fits with Peter's proclamation in Acts 10:43 in which the same expression “sins may be forgiven” (*aphesin hamartiōn*) occurs. There it is granted on the basis of faith alone.

, c) In Luke 24:47 and Acts 5:31 the same writer, Luke, indicates that repentance results in remission of sins.



1 Peter 3:18–22

¹⁸For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, ¹⁹by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, ²⁰who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were **saved through water- ARK KEPT THEM OUT OF THE WATER.** ²¹There is also an antitype which now saves us—**baptism FIGURATIVE IMMERSION INTO JESUS CHRIST** (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²²who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.

John the Baptist

Acts 18:²⁴Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. ²⁵This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent

in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though **he knew only the baptism of John**.²⁶ So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

Baptism Post-Resurrection

Acts 19:¹ And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples² he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” So they said to him, “We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.”³ And he said to them, “Into what then were you baptized?” So they said, “Into John’s baptism.”⁴ Then Paul said, “**John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.**”⁵ **When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.**⁶ And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.

⁷ Now the men were about twelve in all.

The gift of the Holy Spirit is God’s **promise** (cf. 1:5, 8; 2:33) to those who turn to the Lord, including Jews and their descendants and those **who are far off**, that is, Gentiles (cf. Eph. 2:13, 17, 19). Acts 2:38–39 put together the human side of salvation (“repent”) and the divine side (**call** means “to elect”; cf. Rom. 8:28–30).

Acts 2:40 Peter’s **words** in this verse look back to verses 23 and 36. Israel was guilty of a horrendous sin; individual Jews could be spared from God’s judgment on that **generation** if they would repent (cf. Matt. 21:41–44; 22:7; 23:34–24:2). They would be set apart to Christ and His church if only they would be disassociated from Israel.

Acts 2:41 **Three thousand** who believed **were baptized**, thus displaying their identification with Christ. This group of people immediately joined the fellowship of believers.

Acts 2:42 The believers first continued steadfastly (*proskarterountes*, “persisting in or continuing in”; cf. 1:14; 2:46; 6:4; 8:13; 10:7; Rom. 12:12; 13:6; Col. 4:2) in **the apostles’ teaching** or doctrine. The second was **fellowship**, which is defined as **the breaking of bread and ... prayer**. The omission of “and” between “fellowship” and “to the breaking of bread and to prayer” indicates the last two activities are appositional to fellowship. Perhaps the breaking of bread included both the Lord’s Table and a common meal (cf. Acts 2:46; 20:7; 1 Cor. 10:16; 11:23–25; Jude 12).

Acts 2:43 **Wonders** (*terata*, “miracles evoking awe”) and **miraculous signs** (*sēmeia*, “miracles pointing to a divine truth”) authenticated the veracity of **the apostles** (cf. 2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:3–4). The apostles performed many such “signs and wonders” (Acts 4:30; 5:12; 6:8; 8:6, 13; 14:3; 15:12). Christ too had performed many “wonders” and “signs”—and also “miracles” (*dynameis*, “works of power”).

Acts 2:44–45 The **selling** of property and the common possession of the proceeds may imply that the early church expected the Lord to return soon and establish His kingdom. This may explain why the practice was not continued. Holding **everything in common** was **not socialism or communism** because it was voluntary (cf. 4:32, 34–35; 5:4). Also their goods were not evenly distributed but were given to meet needs as they arose.

Acts 2:46–47 The activities described in verses 42–47 would tend to separate the *believers* from traditional Judaism even though **every day** (cf. v. 47) **they continued** (*proskarterountes*; cf. v. 42) **to meet together in the temple courts**. One of the subthemes of Acts is joy, (5:41; 8:8, 39; 11:23; 12:14; 13:48, 52; 14:17; 15:3, 31; 16:34; 21:17). In their fellowship **they broke bread in their homes and ate together** (cf. 2:42) with joy. (The word **praising** [*ainountes*] is used only nine times in the NT, seven of them by Luke: Luke 2:13, 20; 19:37; 24:53; Acts 2:47; 3:8–9; Rom. 15:11; Rev. 19:5). With the first of seven summary progress reports (cf. Acts 6:7; 9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20; 28:30–31) Luke brought this section of Acts to a close: each day others **were being saved**.¹

¹ Stanley D. Toussaint, “Acts,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 357–360.