

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Acts: The Continuing Earthly Ministry Of Our Lord Jesus Christ
Part IV: The Empowering Of The Church For Ministry, Acts 2:1-47
C. The Ministry Of Discipling Devout, Errant Hebrews In The Holy Spirit's Power
(Acts 2:37-41)

I. Introduction

- A. Peter's Acts 2:38 KJV call that his hearers "Repent, and be baptized . . . in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" has created a stir in many circles, for it omits a simple reference to **trusting** Christ, and **can appear** to teach the **work** of **baptism** for justification!
- B. The context reveals Peter was ministering to a special group of people who needed special instruction due to their entrenched, errant religious view! Understanding this fact answers such concerns, and illustrates our need to minister in wisdom to folk we disciple who are entrenched in errant religious views:

II. The Ministry Of Discipling Devout, Errant Hebrews In The Holy Spirit's Power, Acts 2:37-41.

- A. When Peter gave his reply to men who asked him "What shall we do?" upon being told they had crucified their Messiah and Lord (Acts 2:36-37), he was speaking to religiously devout Hebrews, Acts 2:5 with 2:1.
- B. These were folk who had not come to trust in Jesus as God's Son and their Messiah, for they had even consented unto Christ's crucifixion according to Peter's Acts 2:36 statement!
- C. Thus, these very devout but errant Hebrews needed a **radical change** in their **view** about **Christ**, a move calling for "repentance" to constitute this **change** of **view**, the meaning of the Greek term, *metanoeo* translated "repent" in Acts 2:38; Ibid., p. 423; Theological Dictionary of the N. T., vol. IV, p. 976-977.
- D. Peter thus directed these devout but errant Hebrews to change their minds about Jesus, to recognize Him as Messiah and God **that they trust in Him for forgiveness and reception of the Holy Spirit**, Acts 2:38.
- E. Accordingly, Peter did **NOT** here deviate from the true Gospel of justification by faith alone (as follows):
 - 1. In other passages in Acts, at Acts 15:8-11 and 10:43, Peter taught justification was by faith, not works!
 - 2. Thus, by his Acts 2:38 call, Peter **must** have meant that justification was by faith alone, and that water baptism was not the means of the remission of sins, but the accompanying testimony of that true faith:
 - a. The verb "repent" is in the plural form as is the pronoun "your" in the phrase "so that your sins may be forgiven (lit., 'unto the remission of your sins,')"; thus, "the verb 'repent' must go with the purpose of forgiveness of sins," Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament, p. 359.
 - b. Conversely, the verb "be baptized" is in the singular form, making it a parenthetical section of the sentence so that water baptism is the testimonial deed to that inner repentance, Ibid.
 - c. Accordingly, a better way to understand the verse is for it to read as follows: "Repent, that is, change your view of Jesus (and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ) so that your sins may be forgiven." Ibid. It was the repentance, the change of view regarding Jesus Christ, that led Peter's errant Hebrew listeners to put their faith in Christ with the resulting forgiveness of sins; being baptized in Jesus' name gave outward consent to that change of mind and resulting faith.
- F. Thus, the Holy Spirit led Peter in Acts 2:38 to direct Jews who knew the Old Testament God's predictions about the Messiah, but who had not yet trusted Christ to be their Lord and Messiah, to change their views about Him; that readily led to faith in Jesus, resulting in their receiving forgiveness of sins and the Holy Spirit, and to the need for them to exhibit such faith by being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ!

Lesson: *In the Spirit's power, Peter called Jews who knew the Old Testament messianic prophecies, but who had consented to Jesus' death, to change their minds about Him; this involved accepting Him to be the Messiah and God by faith that they might have their sins forgiven and receive the Holy Spirit. He added they were to be baptized in Jesus' Name as evidence of that change of view and attending faith!*

Application: *(1) Though the Gospel of salvation is always by faith alone in Christ alone, the Holy Spirit leads His messengers to clarify that fact in a way that communicates to the comprehension of people affected by deeply errant religious views, and of the need for their change of view! (2) This implies we need to rely on the Holy Spirit (a) to UNDERSTAND the VIEWS of devoutly religious, errant folk, and (b) to give them the truth in a way that leads them to SHIFT FROM their ERROR TO the TRUTH!*