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THE SERMON ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST
(Part 4)

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF THE ACTS
NUMBER 10
ACTS 2:33-38

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In this fourth discussion of the message Simon Peter delivered at Pentecost, we now study the principle of Christ's Ascension. Peter mentioned the exaltation of Christ. In John 7:39 we read "The Holy Spirit was not yet given because Christ was not yet glorified". In the Old Testament era very few people were indwelt by the Holy Spirit; in fact, less than 1% of the Old Testament saints were indwelt by the Holy Spirit. The ministry of the Holy Spirit in Old Testament times was limited and specialized. Even though this is true, remember God the Holy Spirit has always convicted and brought to conversion every believer. But when it comes to the Holy Spirit indwelling and sustaining the believer every day, this is something new with the coming of the Church Age. Before Jesus Christ was glorified, the ministry of the Holy Spirit was limited to a few prophets, priests, kings, judges and a few who worked on the Tabernacle. In that time they could lose the Holy Spirit. King Saul, you remember, had the Spirit depart from him. Once we get to the new age, the Church Age, everything is changed. Every single believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

ACTS 2:33 "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." This verse simply says that since Jesus is now "By the right hand of God exalted", the Holy Spirit is given to every believer. We don't have to pray "Give me the Holy Spirit" for this is an accomplished fact in the life of every Christian. Since Christ can't be here with us, He gives himself in His Spirit's presence in the heart and life of every believer. This 33rd verse says that this is exactly what has happened here at Pentecost.

PSALM 110:1 "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." This is not referring at all to David. Literally it means, "God says to God--"Sit down". Obviously, God the Father is speaking to the humanity of Christ. This verse says that at the 2nd Advent of Christ, all the enemies of God are to be defeated--are to become his footstool.

ACTS 2:36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." This verse says this--Know with confidence that God hath made Jesus both Lord and Christ, both human and divine.

ACTS 2:37 "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" This is their response. They were pricked in their minds. The word pierced their minds. This is the piercing of their minds by the truth of the Gospel by the Holy Spirit. These unbelievers are now under conviction. They say, "What shall we do"? Remember, they are self-righteous Jews and they think they have to do something in order to be saved.

ACTS 2:38 "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." As this verse now stands, many have misinterpreted it. Many false systems have been built on this verse. In fact, whole denominations have gone astray because they misunderstand what this verse says. The most obvious error that comes from this verse is baptismal regeneration. They think this verse says you must be baptized to be saved. But baptism is something man does. All ritual is work. Someone actually does something.

HOSEA 6:6 "For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings." This verse says you need to know something before you do something. There is absolutely no work man can do to help save himself. This is clearly stated in verses like the following:

TITUS 3:5 "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost"

EPHESIANS 2:8 and 9 "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." For a moment let us review the work of Christ for our salvation. Here is the cross where Christ died for our salvation. On the cross, Jesus was dealing with the old sin nature of man. All sins of the world were poured out on him. This is shown in the following verses:

1 PETER 2:25 "For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."

2 COR. 5:21 "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

1 JOHN 2:2 "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." God the Father actually judged all of our sins at the cross. Once judged, our sins can never be judged again. Christ did all the work. He does not need our help. In Psalm 22:1 we read "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" God the Father and God the Holy Spirit forsook Him and He alone bore our sins. Then He cried, "It is finished". This simply means that salvation was finished, completed, and nothing we do can add to it. Therefore, to be saved all we have to do is to believe on Christ. FAITH IS THE ABSENCE OF HUMAN WORKS. On the other side of the coin is repent. This word repent means to change your mental attitude, change your thinking. These people have heard the Gospel and they ask what they can do. Peter says, "Repent". Believe in Christ. Christ is the object of faith. Whosoever can believe. Repent means to change your mind about Christ. Repent and believe are the same, they go together, and you can't have one without the other. They are two sides of the same coin. In our English today, repent means to feel sorry for your sins, but it didn't mean that when this was written. You are not saved by feeling sorry for your sins, for if you were saved by feeling sorry for your sins, you would be saved by something you did, and that's works. It means a change of mental attitude. These were Jews from all over the world and they were holding back in their mental attitude about Christ. So Peter says to them, "Repent, change your minds about Christ, accept him as the Messiah". Repent and believe are synonymous terms. The more you work for salvation the deeper you get in debt.

ROMANS 4:4 "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt" No one has ever been saved by feeling sorry for his sins. Salvation is His work, not ours. The important thing is how God feels about sins. He judged all our sins at the cross. The old sin nature of all men was judged at the cross and human works were rejected and reserved for judgment at the last judgment. When a person rejects Christ, he stands on his old sin nature. By this action, he proclaims to the world "I am good enough without Christ". His old sin nature says that he is good enough, that he will work for his salvation. So you see, unbelievers want to be saved by feeling sorry for their sins. Believers want to be forgiven and restored by feeling sorry for their sins. Both are dead wrong. In fact, this is blasphemy. This is an insult to the work of Christ and a rejection of His work for us. The guilt of sin was handled at the cross. The power of sin and the power over sin is handled by our use of 1st John 1:9, the confession of our sins. Psychology and psychiatry both emphasize the fact that we must feel sorry for our sins.

REPENT

AND

BE BAPTIZED

Aorist tense--Any point of time
Active voice--You do it

Imperative Mood-- I command it
2nd Person Plural--All of you
must repent.

Aorist tense--Any point of time
Passive voice--Something done for
you.

Imperative Mood--I command it
3rd Person Singular--One at a time.

The construction of this language in this verse is so clear that it is quite evident Luke is trying to keep us from misunderstanding it. It is like waving a red flag and saying, "Please don't misunderstand what I am trying to say". Repent and baptism are separated, one in the active voice and one in the passive voice. The way they are constructed means that they are two separate acts. One is in the realm of the spirit, the other is in the realm of the physical. Repent is something you do yourself, baptism is something that is done for you. Baptism comes after believing has been completed. This language is actually saying this - be saved by repenting, then after you are saved you are to be baptized. Repentance is the act of faith which brings salvation, and after this happens then you are baptized to indicate you have been saved and are identified with Christ.

The whole purpose of water baptism is for you to say three things--

1. I understand that I am identified with Christ in his death. I am dead to human good.
2. I am identified with Christ as He is seated at the right hand of God. I cannot lose my salvation.
3. Being identified with Christ, I now am in position to produce divine good.

SUMMARY

These are two separate acts here--One is repent, a mental and spiritual act; the other is baptism, a physical and identification act.

One is in the active voice, you must do it yourself. The other is in the passive voice, and is something done for you.

Repent is phase one, be baptized is phase two.

"For the remission of sins."

This word for is "eis" pronounced ice. In other passages, it is translated "Because of". It should be so translated here. This should read, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ because of the remission of your sins". Because all sins have been paid for. The cross solved the sin problem and rejected human good.

It goes on to say, "And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit".

GALATIANS 3:24 and 25 "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." The law was a school bus to bring us to Christ. Does it say, "That we might be justified by baptism"? No indeed. It says, "That we might be justified by faith". But after faith is come, you are no longer riding in the school bus of the law. "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ.

GALATIANS 3:27 "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." The baptism spoken of here unites all believers and it means union with Christ. This happens when you believe, before you ever get near the water. All believers are one in Christ. This is spiritual baptism. But people in ignorance write this passage above their baptistry and think it refers to water baptism. Ignorance of the Word of God has led people to believe in baptismal regeneration. But you know better for this teaching of the Word of God has been made plain to you.