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## CHRISTIANITY AT PENTECOST WAS NOT COMMUNISM

ACTS 2:39-47  
A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF ACTS  
NUMBER 11

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ACTS 2:39 "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." "The promise is unto you" refers to the promise of salvation, through the blood of Christ. Salvation was complete by what Jesus did on the cross. "It is finished" means that he did it all. It was completed, and nothing else will ever be added to it.

It means "Salvation is unto you and your children". In Acts 16:31 we read of salvation including children--"And thy house". But the meaning of the language is quite clear. You believe, then you are saved. Then those children in your house, as they believe, they will be saved. Nowhere does the Bible say you can believe for your children. Here in Acts 2, Peter is saying the same thing Paul says in Acts 16. Children have to believe in Christ for themselves.

So we can read it this way--"To your children" as they believe. "To all who are afar off", refers to the Gentiles.

"Even as many as the Lord our God shall call", gets many people upset. Please remember that predestination and election mean exactly the same thing; to share the destiny of Christ. When a person believes in Christ, he is identified with Christ and shares his destiny, shares his election. The language actually says, "Who the Lord shall invite". Christ actually invites every member of the human race to be saved. The potential includes all. But when people go on negative signals and refuse to believe, then God has done all He can do. Please remember, He invites all members of the human race to be saved.

ACTS 2:40 "And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation." This verse says you are to keep on testifying, and keep on exhorting. This means there are many ways to testify to people. "Testify" means to give them the Gospel. "Exhort" means to tell them what to do in order to be saved. DON'T CRITICIZE PEOPLE - DON'T TRY TO CHANGE THEIR BAD HABITS - DON'T RUN THEM DOWN FOR THEIR SINS. Just give them information about Christ and the Cross. Tell them the "Good news". The good news is not that we are sinners, but that Christ is a great Saviour. Exhort does not mean that you are to use pressure. It means to witness with earnestness and enthusiasm. "Save yourselves" simply means this--I have done all I can do, I have witnessed to you, now it is up to you either to believe or reject.

ACTS 2:41 "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." There was a response. That phrase, "Then they that gladly received the word", is in the aorist tense and means the very second they received the word they were saved. Then after they were saved, they were taught. They were taught positional truth, that when Christ died on the cross, he paid the full penalty of every sin of every old sin nature in the world. Christ rejected human good as being inadequate. So when we come into union with Christ then we can produce human good that is acceptable. "Baptism" means we reject human good and identify ourselves with Christ and divine good. Communism is based on human good and human effort, and through human good and human effort they claim they will one day establish perfect environment. This is the whole concept of Dialectical Materialism. But this is only a theory, and it cannot be substantiated by fact. In baptism the believer rejects human good, and becomes identified with Christ in his resurrection. The purpose of water baptism is to say that you have broken with human good and you now depend only on Christ.

So the real issue of the cross was this--Human good versus divine good. That day about 3,000 were converted and came to Christ in faith.

The Beginning of the Church

ACTS 2:42 "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." This is where the church began. Here is the real secret of the power of the church.

1. The secret of the power of the church was in Bible doctrine. They continued in doctrine--they had stability. They went right on regardless of circumstances. You see, being a Christian does not depend on circumstances.
2. These first church members had fellowship with the Lord. Once you have fellowship with the Lord, then you can have fellowship with people.
3. "The breaking of bread"-- The only ritual for the church today is found in this chapter. Baptism and the Lord's Table - Behind the ritual of the breaking of bread is closeness with Christ.
4. Prayer - This was the source of the power of the Church.

ACTS 2:43 "And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles." Here the word "fear" means respect for authority. They respected the apostles because they gave them doctrine.

ACTS 2:44 "And all that believed were together, and had all things common"  
Christian charity versus Communism.

Because this verse says, "They had all things in common", many say that this teaches Communism. Many say that Christianity endorses the communist principle. Nothing is farther from the truth. Communism is rationalism. Christianity is based on the Word of God. Communism says there is no God. Christianity is based on faith in One Living God. Communism says the solution of man's problems is collective--in mass. Christianity says the solution of man's problems is personal. Communism says a changed environment is the answer. Christianity says regeneration of the heart is the answer.

Nine Principles On The Phrase, "They had all things in common"

1. The principle of believers helping other believers in times of emergency is the subject of this verse. Here at Pentecost was an emergency situation. People were ostracized because they had believed in Christ. The Greek and Hebrew conflict came up. Political and religious conflicts arose. This charity came at this time to help people in a time of need.
2. Persecution began immediately. They lost property; they lost money. They were considered as imposters.
3. This is not Communism. What they really did here is what we know today as Charity.
4. Christianity and Communism are mutually exclusive and antagonistic.
5. Christianity emphasizes the God Head and magnifies God, while Communism denies God and glorifies man.
6. Christianity recognizes the freedom of man and the rights of private property. Communism rejects all this and says that all property belongs to the state.
7. This passage does not advocate Communism or Socialism. There will be inequalities as long as the world stands. Men are different and they will never all be made equal. Communism and Socialism says that the only way you can get all people equal is for the government to do everything for people. But Bible doctrine teaches people to trust the Lord. Communism seeks to lower everybody to one common level. Christianity seeks to lift people up one by one. One difficulty we face at this point is that most people think of Christianity as the liberals interpret it.

8. Dispossessed people were helped by people who had material things.
9. Later on there would come another crisis and Paul brought an offering to help the poor saints in Jerusalem.

ACTS 2:45 "And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need." Here we have the mechanics of what they did. They got the money together so they could help these people in need. Administering this called for the selection, a little bit later, of a group of Deacons.

ACTS 2:46 "And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart" This is how they maintained unity. Had worship services in various homes. They ate food with "extreme joy". You see, being mentally disturbed hurts digestion. Their lives were anchored to one thing--Bible Doctrine.

ACTS 2:47 "Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Praising God simply meant they realized the source of all their blessings came from God.

These new Christians were relaxed, happy, and were gloriously genuine. People recognized the Christianity they had was not superficial. People can detect a phony real quick. Real Christians are always genuine. It closes this glorious chapter with the words, "Those who were added to the Church were those who were being saved".