

Acts 2.37-47: Developments in the *Church* at Jerusalem Pt2

Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" 38 And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." 40 And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation."

I. The expansion of the church (from 120 to thousands)

God used Peter's sermon to bring conviction of sin **Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"** (2.37).

A. Peter gave the gospel offer (its duty, promise, warrant, and exhortation)

1. The duty of the gospel offer: **Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ** (2.38a) showing that true repentance includes submission to Christ's authority (as King).

2. The promise of the gospel offer: **for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit** (2.38b). To repentance *shown in the obedience of baptism* is the promise of exemption from the punishment due our sins including the guilt of crucifying Christ.

3. The warrant of the gospel offer

First, Peter gives his guilt-ridden hearers warrant for coming to God despite their deep guilt: **For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off** (Acts 2.39a). He does so by affirming that the promise of the gospel is truly for all those implicated in the crucifixion: for you (who are cut to the heart for crucifying the very Jesus that God made Lord and Christ, 2.36), and for your children (that you included in your sin, saying, **His blood be on us and on our children!** Mat 26.25), and for the Gentiles (with whom you conspired in the killing of Jesus, Acts 4.27). You guilty ones, your cursed children, and your Gentile collaborators have the gospel promise as a free offer; the gracious promise to all is your warrant to come. The overture justifies your coming, so come. If you, your children, and Gentiles repent and show it by entering the new covenant community by baptism, you will receive forgiveness of your sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit (to be present with you for your sanctification); that is encouraging, so repent.

Second, Peter says: **For the promise is for...everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself** Interestingly, the fact of God's call is also an inducement to repent in three ways at least: a) it assures that God continues to call people despite the recent events, b) it gives hope by placing salvation in God and not in man; if salvation depends on me, I have little motivation to turn to God, 3) if God introduces Himself to you then be encouraged that by repentance you have forgiveness (if you have been called to know Him then your forgiveness is secure).

4. The summary exhortation of the gospel offer (save yourselves by repentance-baptism)

And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation" (2.40).

Offer, calling, repentance, exhortation, and forgiveness go together. This is a call to decision, to commitment, to the making of a choice for the new covenant community versus the crooked one. To save yourself is to personally submit to the command to repent and show it in the public commitment of baptism for forgiveness and the gift of the Holy Spirit. This commitment is the way for you to have personal salvation-deliverance from (to save yourself from) the judgment coming on this crooked generation.

How might you formulate an answer to this Q: Why does this text not teach that salvation depends on us (rather than on God's grace and call rooted in the work of Christ)? [*see the context of the whole Bible on salvation by grace and the context here of God's call*]