

“BE SAVED FROM THIS PERVERSE GENERATION”

Acts 2:37-41

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INTRODUCTION

When Jesus was with His disciples in the upper room before his arrest in the Garden, He had told His disciples that He would send the Spirit who would guide them into all truth (John 16:12-13). Obviously the Spirit’s teaching ministry with Peter had been hugely successful.

Jesus has also predicted that the Spirit would carry on a powerful ministry of convicting the world of *sin*, *righteousness*, and *judgment* (Jn. 16:8-10). Now we see that this is also successful:

- Of sin: their rejection of the Messiah
- Of righteousness: Jesus has gone to the Father
- Of judgment: Be saved from this perverse generation.

In these verses we see the powerful effect of the Spirit’s work:

- 3,000 were saved on this day—more that were saved during Jesus’ 3 ½ years (John 14:12)
- But, the Spirit is not the primary focus—He exalts the Son.
- The Spirit’s work is an extension of Jesus’ work (1:1).

The Holy Spirit wishes to produce the same response through today’s preaching and witnessing.

But, first, the crowd has a question.

I. INQUIRY (37)

A. Depth of Conviction—the first step of genuine repentance (cf. today’s shallow responses; contrast the opposite response to conviction in 5:33 and 7:54.).

B. Determined question: To Peter *and the rest of the Apostles* (they were the obvious leaders; maybe they stood together in support of Peter while he preached.)

- How great their shame—Is. 53
- Cf. Zech 12:10—The Spirit of grace and supplication—looking upon Him whom they have pierced and mourn for Him.
- Compare Saul—I Tim. 1:13: a blasphemer, persecutor, and a violent aggressor, 1:15 “chief of sinners” with Acts 9:4--“he fell to the ground” and 22:10—“What shall I do?”
- This question leads to a straightforward answer.

II. INVITATION (38)

A. Nature of the Requirements

1. Individuality (“each one”)
2. Genuine conversion—repentance—radical change of mind and heart
 - After all, they **had crucified the Christ; now they must crown Him their Lord.**
 - Repentance includes faith (v. 44); two sides of the same coin.
 - Jesus and John the Baptist had both preached repentance.
 - Jesus had told them to preach repentance (Lk. 24:47.)
 - The need for repentance is the constant emphasis in Acts: 3:19; 8:22; 17:30; 20:21; 26:20
 - **We need such radically changed lives today; a need to get rid of all the garbage in the lives of all of the professing believers.**
3. Public Profession—Baptism
 - a. Difference from John’s baptism (cf. Acts 18:25 & 19:3-5)
In the **NAME** of Jesus Christ—confession of His person
There is a **twofold** calling on the Lord here—by the one being baptized, and the one baptizing (thus some texts say “in the name” and some say “on the name”).
 - b. Different from Spirit baptism (Acts 1:5)
Yet, water baptism still required
There is a close connection between repentance and baptism. *A true believer will obey his Lord.*

B. The Results of the Response—“for the forgiveness of your sins”

εἰς either shows purpose or else “on the basis of.”

1. Forgiveness of Sins
 - Why no stress on Christ’s death and shed blood? (Mt. 26:28—blood shed for the forgiveness of sins). These men knew that Christ had died—they killed Him!
 - The New Testament shows that **baptism is not essential** (e.g. 3:19; 5:31; Lk. 24:47; I Cor. 1:13-17.)
2. Reception of the Holy Spirit (vv. 17-21; Joel 2)
 - *Sign* and *seal* of acceptance before God and His Son (Eph. 1:13-14)
 - *Gift*—not *gifts* of the Holy Spirit
 - First it is the Holy Spirit Himself.
 - Then it includes the saving benefits of Christ’s work applied by the Spirit.
 - The laying on of hands *is not required.*
 - Receiving forgiveness and the Holy Spirit show that this invitation is valid!

III. ASSURANCE (39)

A. Identification of the Promise (i.e. Joel 2 and Acts 2:17-21; reiterated by Jesus in 1:4)

B. Extent of the Promise

1. The Hearers—“You”

2. The children of the hearers—distance in time. (cf. v. 17: “sons & daughters”; cf. OT covenants.
 3. Those “far off”—distance in place.
 - This can refer to the exiles—vv. 5, 14; I Pet. 1:1; such is the emphasis of Joel 2. Isaiah 57:19—the one “far off” is the exile.
 - Gentiles—Zech. 6:15; Eph. 2:13, 17
 - The Holy Spirit intended Gentiles here—even if Peter and his audience would have excluded them!
- C. Possibility of the Promise—“As many as the Lord our God shall call to Himself”
- **God must call first**—see Joel 2:32. Acts 2:21 shows that they call on the name of the Lord.
 - **Romans 10:13**—Paul applies this same verse also to Gentiles.
 - **This is a personal and individual call.**

Because of such Assurance, Peter makes an appeal.

IV. APPEAL (40)

- A. Extent –“Many other words” (entire sermon not given)
Those who say that we must not use persuasion and human effort to reach lost souls have no real comprehension of the heart of the early Gospel preachers.
- B. Earnestness—“solemnly testified”—give an earnest witness
This would include a protest against false views.
- C. Exhortation –persistently, he “kept on exhorting them”; he made repeated appeals.
 1. Nature of: “Be saved” from (v. 21; Joel 2:32)
 2. Need: coming judgment due to their sin
“Wicked generation”—crooked and dishonest, Perversity in turning from the truth.
Have rejected the Messiah.

How did these people respond?

V. RESPONSE (41)

- A. Reception of the Message
 - This means that they repented of their sins.
 - They confessed their faith in Jesus Christ
- B. Baptism
- C. Added to the Assembly—3,000 “souls”, persons. **Membership was important also.**

CONCLUSION

What should you do? Repent and be converted; be baptized; join in a sound Bible believing church; be delivered from this “perverse generation.