ACTS 2:37-41

A. 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?

After Peter's challenging, warning and convicting message, many felt guilty of themselves and their **nation's** crucifixion of their Messiah. This truth, through the Holy Spirit, lodged in their hearts. Peter blamed/charged them with the **murder** of Jesus Christ and they are brought under conviction.

*They ask the right question: [what shall we do?]

Answer:

B. 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.

1. Here is where many begin to change the simple meaning of this verse to **make** it harmonize with the gospel of grace message. They twist Scripture to make the Pentecostal Jewish program match the program of God that is for today. They are **wrong**!

2. Peter's message harmonizes completely with **Christ's** great commission.

   Mark 1:4 - John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

   Matthew 3:6 - And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

   Mark 16:16 - He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

3. *Peter's message coincides with previous Kingdom messages. The only difference between Peter's proclamation, John's and others, was one of historic **develop**ment. The Holy Spirit had come, but there was **no** change in the meaning of Israel's ordinance of baptism, because the Jews came confessing their sins - then baptism. John's baptism and Peter's both signified a confession of sin and a cleansing.

4. Some use this verse for baptismal **regen**eration. They say that water has power to convey salvation.

5. Some say baptism is a door that leads to Christ Who does the saving (baptism **first**, then salvation).

6. Some say not to take Acts 2:38 **liter**ally. One must believe, receive the Holy Spirit, then become a candidate for baptism.

   *All of this is done in view of **Paul's** epistles.

7. Context shows in Acts 2 that God is dealing with Israel, who is in **cove**nant with God.

   Acts 3:25 - Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.

a. Under this covenant, God gave Israel different sacrifices and ceremonial **wash**ings, which are called **bap**tisms.

Hebrews 9:10 - *Which stood* only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed *on them* until the time of reformation.

Hebrews 6:2 - Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

b. These ordinances did not save in the **same** sense that we today think of salvation. We think of being saved as a regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, where He **changes** spiritually dead sinners into living saints - children of God (Eph. 2:1).

c. But with these covenant Jews, Israel's sacrifices-baptisms were **re**quired by God. If the individual did not perform them, they were cut **off** from the covenant people.

Numbers 9:13 - But the man that *is* clean, and is not in a journey, and forbeareth to keep the pass over, even the same soul shall be cut off from among his people: because he brought not the offering of the LORD in his appointed season, that man shall bear his sin.

Numbers 19:13 - Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself, defileth the tabernacle of the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from Israel: because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness *is* yet upon him.

d. In Acts 2:38, Israel, as a nation, had crucified their Messiah. Peter is now calling them to repent (to change their minds) from their unbelieving sinful action. Peter calls on them to be **saved** and cleansed so that they would not be cut off from God's covenant. If they obeyed and believed in Peter's message that Jesus was the Christ-the Messiah, they would remain in covenant relationship with God and then **receive** the Holy Spirit (as the rest did at Pentecost).

Question? Wouldn't it be wrong, or foolish, to apply this verse to our **present dispensation? We do not have to **twist** Peter's message to coincide with Paul's, nor Paul's message to agree with Peter's Jewish covenant program message.

*We should leave both intact for their **own** dispensation.

8. Baptism simply means a thorough complete **identi**fication. Because we have been so ingrained by our denomination, church and tradition, the first thing that we think of when we say baptism is **water**!

a. There are many dry baptisms:

(1) Baptism of **power** of the Holy Spirit to Israel - Acts 1:8, Mark 1:8

(2) Baptism of Israel unto Moses - I Corinthians 10:2

(3) Baptized disciples with Jesus into His death - Mark 10:38

(4) Baptism of Israel into **fire** - Luke 3:16

(5) Jesus baptized into **death** - Luke 12:50

(6) We are baptized spiritually into Christ's death - Romans 6:3

(7) We are baptized by the Spirit into the **Body** of Christ - I Corinthians 12:13

(8) We are **buried** with Christ in Spirit baptism - Colossians 2:12

b. There were many baptisms in the O.T., Hebrews 6:1-2 & 9:10. At times they are called washings, pourings, and **sprink**lings (Lev. 11:25, Exo. 30:18-21, Exo. 29:4, Num. 19:13, 19).

Ezekiel 36:24-25 - For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Eze. 36:25 Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.

c. Baptism was an act of purification and cleansing, not a picture of **death**.

d. Baptism of Israelites in the gospels was in **pre**paration for their role as **priests**. All priests needed to be ceremonially purified through water baptism. This is why John the Baptist and the disciples were commanded to water baptize.

Exodus 19:5-6 - Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth *is* mine: Exo. 19:6 And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These *are* the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

Exodus 29:1, 4 - And this *is* the thing that thou shalt do unto them to hallow them, to minister unto me in the priest's office: Take one young bullock, and two rams without blemish, Exo. 29:4 And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt wash them with water.

Matthew 28:19 - Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: (scattered Jews?)

e. Paul's commission does **not** include baptism - I Corinthians 15:1-4.

I Corinthians 1:17 - For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

f. We today, in the Dispensation of Grace, do not have **any** ordinances (laws) to follow.

Ephesians 2:15 - Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace;

Colossians 2:14, 20 - Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; Col. 2:20 Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,

g. In contrast to the multiple baptisms under Israel's Kingdom Program, we have only **one** baptism.

Ephesians 4:5 - One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

I Corinthians 12:13 - For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Note: What a vast difference between Peter at Pentecost, demanding repentance and baptism **for** the remission of sins, and Paul later proclaiming Christ's **right**eousness for the remission of sins (Rom. 3:21-28).

9. [Repent]? This means to **change** your mind, to think **dif**ferently about the thing. Peter is saying to think differently in light of 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.]

God has made Him Lord and Messiah. Therefore you better change your **mind as to Who He really is. Quit rejecting Him, and **accept** Him. Quit saying, "Away with this man...He will not reign over us". Think about Him how God thinks of Him. It is synonymous to saying **be**lieve on Him. When you turn from unbelief to belief, you have changed your mind - repented. You think differently about Christ than you did **pre**viously.

* Now let's read 2:38 again:
* [Repent (*change your mind about Christ*) be baptized (*washed*) every one of you (*not only those who feel led*) in the name of Jesus Christ (*fully identified with Him*) for the remission of sins (*not merely a testimony of a burial with Christ*) and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (*then, and **not** until then*).

C. 1. The **pro**mise of the Holy Spirit was for those who repented and were baptized - ceremonially puri-

> 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.

fied - identified with Christ.

Remember: Ephesians 2:11-12 - Wherefore remember, that ye *being* in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; Eph. 2:12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

2. Those afar off are not **Gentiles**, but are those Jews who were scattered, living in other places-nations.

Daniel 9:7 - O Lord, righteousness *belongeth* unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, *that are* near, and *that are* far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee.

Isaiah 33:13-14, 17 - Hear, ye *that are* far off, what I have done; and, ye *that are* near, acknowledge my might. Isa. 33:14 The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? Isa. 33:17 Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off.

D.

> Acts 2:40-41 - And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. 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.

1. There is not the slightest intimation that these first ones to be baptized at Pentecost were formed into an entirely **new** entity, the **Body** of Christ. The 3000 saved were "added" to the group of Kingdom saints, the ones saved during the earthly ministry of Christ. There was no Gentile, as such, until Acts 10.

   *These Pentecostal believers made up the **rem**nant of Israel.

2. 3000 Jewish people (faith proven by repentance and water baptism) were added to the already existing Messianic Church of Kingdom saints (120). This may **seem** like a large number, but it is a **small** number-minority in comparison to the Jews in Israel and in other nations.

   *This amount is a remnant, a **small** fraction of the nation who were unbelieving, in apostasy, awaiting God's **wrath** to be poured out on them. So the majority, as a nation, did not repent nor were baptized.

   In one year, this "untoward generation" will lose their **final opportunity. As a nation, they will be set aside **until** after the Rapture. Then, as the Tribulation begins, God moves in Israel again.

   Romans 11:5, 25-28 - Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. Rom. 11:25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, *until* the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. Rom. 11:26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: Rom. 11:27 For this *is* my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. Rom. 11:28 As concerning the gospel, *they are* enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, *they are* beloved for the fathers' sakes.