

### The Results of the Holy Spirit Coming at Pentecost

#### Acts 2:36-47

Acts 2:36-47: *“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”* <sup>37</sup> Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, *“Men and brethren, what shall we do?”* <sup>38</sup> Then Peter said to them, *“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”* <sup>39</sup> For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.” <sup>40</sup> And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, *“Be saved from this perverse generation.”* <sup>41</sup> Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. <sup>42</sup> And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. <sup>43</sup> Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. <sup>44</sup> Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, <sup>45</sup> and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. <sup>46</sup> So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, <sup>47</sup> praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”

#### Background Notes

Thousands of Jews from all over the Roman Empire, where Jews had been scattered, gathered in the Temple area of Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Pentecost. It was on this day that the Holy Spirit came upon and filled the early Christians, and the Church was born. In languages known to the people from other lands, the early Christians witnessed to the thousands of religious Jews and proselytes gathered in the Temple area. Then Peter stood up to explain what was going on, and gave his first sermon.

At the end of his powerful and convicting sermon, the listening Jews were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, *“Men and brethren, what shall we do?”* And Peter said to them, *“Repent and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”*

Peter’s response has been interpreted by some Christians to mean that to be saved, you must be baptized. It’s easy to see why people might come to that conclusion. What did Peter say? *“Repent and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.”* So some have interpreted these words to mean that baptism is necessary for salvation. However, it can’t mean that - for several reasons:

**1. It would contradict other clear Scriptures that teach that salvation is by grace through faith alone.** Romans 10:9, *“If you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”* No requirement of baptism added there, is there? And Romans 10:13 says, *“Whosoever shall call upon*

*the name of the Lord shall be saved.*” What about John 3:16? *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”* There’s no requirement of baptism added in John 3:16! So you don’t have to be baptized to be saved, because it would contradict many other clear teaching passages of Scripture.

**2. The Lord Jesus never told His converts to be baptized.** If baptism was necessary for salvation, He certainly would have.

**3. The thief on the cross who believed was not baptized.** Yet the Lord said to him, *“Today you will be with Me in paradise.”*

**4. The apostle Paul would never have written 1 Corinthians 1:14 and 17 if baptism is necessary for salvation.**

These verses may be the strongest argument against baptism being necessary for salvation. 1 Corinthians 1:14: *“I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius”* and verse 17, *“For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel.”* Would Paul have written those verses if baptism were necessary for salvation? **No way!**

Acts 2:38 could be translated: “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized because your sins have been remitted.” Peter was simply giving the next logical step, that Christian baptism should follow repentance and salvation. This was especially important for Jews who were becoming believers in Jesus as Messiah and Savior. It was important for them to renounce their ties with unbelieving Judaism, and proclaim their identification with Jesus Christ by undergoing Christian baptism.

So if you’re a true believer and you haven’t yet been baptized as a believer, Christian baptism would be the proper step for you to take. However, baptism is not essential for your salvation.

Three thousand souls were saved and baptized on the day of Pentecost! Where were they baptized? There’s no lake or river by the Temple. Did they bus them down to the Jordan River, about seventeen miles away? No! Did they sprinkle them? No. Here’s where biblical archaeology is very helpful. In the excavations of the Temple area in Jerusalem, a great number of small pools, Jewish ritual washing pools, have been uncovered. A Jewish ritual cleansing pool is called a *mikvah* (plural: *mikvaot*). It is most likely that the early Christians used these pools for baptizing the many new converts.

## Doctrinal Points

### 1. The early Christians lived a balanced Christian life.

Verse 42: *“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”* Here we see four practices that characterized the early Church:

- a. The apostles’ doctrine or teaching.
- b. Christian fellowship.

- c. The Breaking of Bread: the celebration of the Lord's Supper or communion.
- d. Prayer.

These four practices were not just important for the early Church – they're important for churches today. In fact, if you're looking for a good church to attend, look to see if these four practices are emphasized. And these four practices should not only characterize a church - they should characterize every individual Christian. These four practices make for a balanced Christian life.

Are you a Christian? If so, do you live a balanced Christian life? Do these four practices characterize your life? Is reading the Bible ("the apostles' teaching") an important part of your life? Do you meet frequently with other believers for Christian fellowship? Do you follow the Lord's request that we remember Him in the Lord's Supper? And are you a praying Christian? Does prayer characterize your Christian life?

As a Christian, are you living a balanced Christian life? Do all four of these practices characterize your Christian life and lifestyle? Or only three of the four, or only two of the four? The early Christians lived a balanced Christian life - and so should we!

## 2. The early Christians lived a communal Christian lifestyle.

Verses 44-47: *"Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common,<sup>45</sup> and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.<sup>46</sup> So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart,<sup>47</sup> praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved."*

These verses reveal that the early Christians lived a communal Christian lifestyle. Notice that this was **not** "Christian communism"! No one was forced to give up their property and possessions. It was completely voluntary. In chapter 5, Ananias and Sapphira were not disciplined because they refused to give everything away, but because they lied about their giving.

Furthermore, the communal lifestyle of the early Christians was not like communism because the aim was not to make everyone equal. No - their goal was make sure that the needs would be met for any believer who had needs. Verse 45 says they *"sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need."*

Is the book of Acts teaching here that Christians should live a communal lifestyle today? Should believers live in Christian communes? If some Christians want to live that way, that's fine. The Bible is not against it. But the Bible is not teaching here that Christians *must* live in Christian communes.

When studying the book of Acts, it's important to remember that Acts gives us the **history** of the early Church as it was emerging from Judaism. ***Acts is not a book of Christian doctrine***, like the epistles. For example, Paul never told the

Corinthian Christians to sell their homes and have everything in common. So remember, Acts is a book that gives us the historical events of the early Church.

What about those four practices in verse 42: teaching of the Word, prayer, celebrating the Lord's Supper, and Christian fellowship? Those four practices that characterized the early Church are taught and backed up as important practices in the epistles, in doctrinal passages. These practices were not for the early Church only - they should characterize Christians today as well.

However, as Christians, we should certainly practice verse 44 by looking around and seeing who is need and doing what we can to meet those needs. Meeting the needs of others is a biblical principle! But we don't have to live in Christian communes, or sell all our property and possessions and put all our money in the common pot!

Many Scriptures warn us against selfish hoarding of our money and possessions. We are to meet the needs of those around us. If you're not meeting some need somewhere right now with your material possessions, ask the Lord to open your eyes to see those who are less fortunate around you, who need your help.

So - we don't have to follow the early Church's practice of communal living as a precept, but we certainly should follow the principle of sharing our material goods and meeting the needs of fellow believers. The early Christians lived a communal Christian lifestyle.

## Practical Application

### Have you asked the question yet, "What shall I do?"

Verse 37: *"Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?'"* After Peter's sermon at Pentecost, the listeners were convicted and said, *"What shall we do?"* They realized that they were guilty sinners, and that they needed to do something about it.

Let me paraphrase Peter's response to the question in two words: **"Get saved!"** That's the same answer that God gives people today. If you realize that you're not a Christian, that you're a sinner on the way to hell, and that you're in need of salvation, there's only one answer: **Get saved!** Repent of your sins and receive Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. You can do that today, right now.

Notice that Peter's answer was not: "Do the best you can from now on" or "Try a little harder" or "Don't let it happen again" or "Start going to church." No! The answer for guilty sinners is to **get saved!**

Jesus Christ He died on the cross as your substitute. He died for your sins, so you would not have to suffer the penalty for sin. Trust Him, and receive Him as personal Savior, and you will be saved.

Have you asked the question yet, "What shall I do?"