

ANTIOCH BIBLE CLASS

LESSON TOPIC

THE PROMISE IS UNTO YOU

SCRIPTURE TEXT: ACTS 2:37-40

MEMORY VERSE. 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.

INTRODUCTION

Peter has preached from the prophecies of Joel and David in his explanation and defense of the great outpouring of the Holy Ghost upon the disciples who were gathered in the upper room. One of the less noticed, but equally important affects of this great outpouring of the Holy Ghost, is the work of the Holy Spirit by way of conviction of the hearts and minds of the assembled multitude. This is always an essential work of God which man cannot do. First the disciples received the mighty work of the Holy Spirit upon their lives, causing the amazing manifestation of other tongues. Then the same Holy Spirit empowered Peter to proclaim the gospel message. While this was in process, God was dealing with the hearts of the multitude. Without this no effect would have occurred upon the people in order for their own lives to be changed. Peter preached by the power of the Holy Ghost upon him. The hearts and minds of the people were stirred with conviction about their needs by the same power of the Holy Spirit working in them. The result of this was a work in their lives that caused them to see that there was a need of the Holy Spirit to transform them. That is where this lesson takes us.

DAILY SCRIPTURES AND COMMENTS

MONDAY. ACTS 2:37. WHAT SHALL WE DO?

SCRIPTURE

V37. 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?

COMMENTS.

What shall we do? They have heard the message of a risen Christ. They have witnessed the marvelous outpouring of the Holy Ghost. In addition to that, the power exhibited in others has

gripped their own hearts, convicting them deeply of their personnel need of what they have seen and heard.

It is at this point in their lives, as well as every other person who hears the gospel message, that the individual work of God either progresses or is road-blocked. Without the convicting power of God upon the heart, and our yielding to it, no amount or kind of religious endeavors are effective. But a yielding to this vital element opens the door to everything else God has in store for us. Unfortunately, it is only too often that “professing believers” show few signs of a deeply convicted heart.

There was a multitude of people which were deeply convicted about their need of God; so deeply in fact, that they were reaching out for their needs to be met. They have been “pricked” in their heart by the power of the Holy Ghost at work on that marvelous day.

TUESDAY. ACTS 2:38. REPENT.

SCRIPTURE.

V38. 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.

COMMENTS.

Peter did not respond to their inquiry by telling them to repeat after him “the sinner’s prayer”, and that by doing so they would be born again. Instead he told them to repent (of their sins). Don’t forget that these people already were deeply religious people, following after the law; that is why they were in Jerusalem in the first place. Surely, somewhere among them were some godly people who had obeyed the word of the Lord insofar as they knew it and had been taught. But now a new message, a new covenant, a new day has come and a new life is offered to them in it. The law has been effectively replaced by the redeeming work of Christ, including the giving of the Holy Ghost; Christ has come and all that was prefigured in the law is now available to whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord.

They are not told to repent because they are guilty of some serious sin or ungodliness. They are told to repent because of being possessors of a sinful nature, which no amount of functions of the law could erase. Now faith in Christ is offered by the good grace of God and that faith, received from Peter’s message has led to convictions which calls for repentance. Repentance, like convictions, is indispensable; there is no by pass for it. Sin is deep and strong and it must be put to death in the flesh. What a glorious privilege to take all the baggage of a sin-bound life and lay it at his cross, while you take your own cross to follow him.

Clearly, repentance is a deep sorrow over our sins; a willingness to die to every sinful impulse, and to ask God for his forgiveness. Have you?

WEDNESDAY. ACTS 2:38. BE BAPTIZED.

SCRIPTURE.

See verse 38 reproduced above.

COMMENTS.

Peter continues his counsel in answer to their inquiry by telling them to: “Be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins”.

The ministry of John The Baptist called upon people to “repent”, after which he baptized them. In a way this prepared the hearts of people for what they would experience in Christ.

Baptism is more distinctly portrayed in the death and burial of Christ. His death speaks to our repentance while his burial speaks to our baptism. This is clearly set forth in Rom. 6:3-5, where verse four tells us that “we are buried with him by baptism into death”.

Baptism was not under the law (except by the type of circumcision), and is new under grace. It is specifically connected with the death, burial and resurrection of Christ and in every detail and requirement must be administered unto Christ. That is precisely why Peter instructed them to be baptized “IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST”. There is no other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved. There is no other object of Christian baptism but Christ and his atoning work of death, burial and resurrection. That is why every New Testament example and account of Christian baptism is administered in the name of the Lord Jesus. That is why we baptize into the name of Jesus Christ also.

THURSDAY. ACTS 2:38-39. THE PROMISE IS UNTO YOU.

SCRIPTURE.

V38. 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. 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.

COMMENTS.

At the end of verse 38, Peter said: “And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost”. Then he continues in verse 39, for the promise is unto you (who are now listening to me); and to your children (that shall come after you); and to all that are afar off (Gentiles); even as many as the Lord our God shall call. How can it be any more clearly stated that the great gift of the Holy Ghost, specifically given on the day of Pentecost, is offered by the promise of God to “whosoever will”. It is a point so well made that there is no need for further debate about it.

Let us see if we can put all of this in perspective for the multitude. They were made aware of some phenomenal event transpiring in a house in Jerusalem and were drawn to it to investigate. There they heard the message of the death burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. That message (connected to any other Old Testament prophecies or types which they may have understood) became the basis of

their faith in Christ as their savior. From this faith and the work of the Holy Ghost upon their hearts they came under deep conviction. They cried out for counsel as to what they should do. They are next told to repent (from their sins); and to be baptized in water in the name of Jesus. With this, i.e. faith in Christ, conviction, repentance and water baptism in the name of Jesus, they were then candidates for the gift of the Holy Ghost.

FRIDAY. ACTS 2:40. ACCEPT THIS PROMISE.

SCRIPTURE

V40. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, save yourselves from this untoward generation.

COMMENTS.

Accept the promise (of the Holy Spirit) is the urgent entreaty Peter gives to this convicted, broken and seeking congregation of people. The work of the gospel is basically twofold: (1) encouraging people to yield to the Lord, and (2) teaching those who have yielded all things, whatsoever Christ commanded. Like raising a family, both of these functions go at the same time, as with children already born and others who are born.

Peter urged them to turn from an “untoward generation”. That is simply a generation that has no basic inclination to look to God to be saved. That was the kind of generation the church was born in and it is still the same kind today, therefore the same urgency applies today. Salvation always was and always will be about getting out of the sin business in spite of the many other agenda’s religion may promote otherwise. The way to be sure of that is by hearing and accepting faith in Christ, causing you to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

SUMMARY

There are many extreme views about the baptism of the Holy Ghost. It is virtually impossible to address all of them in such short space. What God is looking for, I believe, is a surrendered, hungry, willing heart. He is not looking for perfection; that is what he wants to lead us towards. Paul had murder and blasphemy in his heart one day and three days later he is filled with the Holy Ghost, preaching Christ. The Ephesian disciples were baptized unto John’s baptism and had not heard that the Holy Ghost had yet been given. How long they waited for the message of the Holy Ghost we do not know.

Nothing has sparked as much confusion, extreme misunderstanding, blasphemy and pure unbelief as the element of “tongues” in the record of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Nothing can be said to avoid that. The best advice is to seek God for his will for your life with passion, hunger, surrender and faith and let God give you the Holy Ghost in his way. It is for sure, if God does it, there will be no doubt

about it. By all means avoid claiming it on the basis of your own will. ONLY God can give it and he will give it only his way, which will, after all, be the most glorious and best way.

And while the spot light is drawn to the manifestation of tongues, whether genuinely from God or fabricated by man, we should not forget the countless other works of the Holy Ghost in our lives. The work of revealing faith, convicting of sins, calling to service, teaching, helping, inspiring and countless other works or fruits are all dependent upon God working by his Spirit. We minimize and forget that the church, the Christian life and every related function is absolutely dependent upon the great work of God by his Spirit; not just initial salvation.

Peter's words in verse 40 are so appropriate: "Save yourselves from this untoward generation".

QUESTIONS

1. List 5 things from this second chapter that are the distinct work of the Holy Ghost.