

Acts 2:41

A great multitude of people assembled on Pentecost drawn to the place where the apostles were by the sound as of a mighty rushing wind and the apostles preached to them. The results were impressive! 3,000 souls were baptized that day. However impressive that was, not all obeyed for some mocked and the statement. "They then that received his word were baptized" carries the implication that some did not receive the Apostle's words. The difference between those who received the word and those who didn't was that those who received the word were baptized and those who didn't receive the word were not baptized.

In John 1:11-12, the Apostle wrote, "and he came unto his own and they that were his own received him not but to as many as received him to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them who believed on his name..." Receiving or rejecting Jesus is the difference between life and death. "Receiving Jesus" means that one receives the words of Jesus. Again we hear John's record: "He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my sayings hath one that judgeth him. The word that I spake the same shall judge him in the last day" (Jn. 12:48). Jesus said that those who received the apostles words received Him, those who rejected the apostles, rejected Him (Lk. 10:16). Thus, those on Pentecost who rejected the Word and the Apostles who preached it (reflected in the fact that they were not baptized) rejected Jesus Christ.

James wrote "Wherefore laying aside all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save your souls" (1:21). There is great power in Christ's words. He calls them "spirit and life" (Jn. 6:63). Peter said Jesus has the words of eternal life (Jn. 6:68). The word is called light (Ps. 119:105); bread (Mt. 4:4); a sword (Eph. 6:17); seed (Lk. 8:11) as well as many other things too numerous to mention. Receiving Christ means receiving His words (Jn. 12:48). Receiving His word ALWAYS means being baptized (Acts 2:41).

Why Where People Baptized On Pentecost?

Why were they told to be baptized? They were told to be baptized to obtain remission of their sins (Acts 2:38). That was the universal reason for baptism every time its purpose was mentioned. Saul was commanded to be baptized to "wash away" his sins (Acts 22:16). Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mk. 16:16). Peter wrote, "Baptism doth also now save us" (1 Pet. 3:21). Since whenever the

purpose for baptism was stated it was ALWAYS for salvation, then all who were baptized (even though the purpose for baptism was not expressly stated) were baptized for the SAME reason.

People WERE NOT BAPTIZED on Pentecost BECAUSE they already were saved. Not one person in the Holy Spirit's record of conversions was told that. The proponents of the doctrine of "salvation by 'faith only'" or "salvation at the 'point of faith'" attempt to make that the meaning of Acts 2:38. The word "for" is found in the KJV and other translations but the Greek word "EIS" from which it is translated means "in order to obtain." Besides this, Peter commanded TWO things "for" (unto) remission of sins: repentance and baptism. These two requirements are joined together by the coordinating conjunction "and" which tells us that whatever baptism is "for", repentance is "for" as well. If baptism is BECAUSE one's sins have already been removed, then one repents BECAUSE his sins have already been removed. But if one repents IN ORDER to obtain remission of sins, one is baptized IN ORDER to obtain remission of sins.

The people on Pentecost were not told to be baptized in order to "show an outward sign of an inward cleansing." It would be 1,200 years before an explanation such as this would be offered for baptism. Jesus said, "Except one is born of the water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (Jn. 3:5). None enters the Kingdom of God who have not been born again, and none are born again who have not been born of the water (water baptism) and the Spirit. In Titus 3:5, Paul told Titus that we are saved by God's mercy "by the washing of regeneration (water baptism) and the renewing of the Holy Spirit." In Ephesians 5:26, the passages tells that the Church is "cleansed by the washing of water (water baptism) with the word."

The people on Pentecost were not told to be baptized to "join some denomination." Men today distinguish between salvation and church membership. The modern concept is that man may be saved and never be part of a denomination. That is true. On the other hand it is not true that one can be saved and never be part of Christ's Church, for the church is the saved (Acts 2:47; Eph. 5:23). We are baptized in the one body (1 Cor. 12:13).

When one receives the word he is baptized. Always. No Exception. If you receive His word you will be baptized just as the people of Pentecost were and you will be baptized for the same reason they were: in order that you might be saved!

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