

New Testament Conversions – No. 2

The Conversion of the Three Thousand

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The Gospel in its fullness was first preached on the first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection and ascension. The record of this historic day and its dramatic results is found in Acts 2. The audience was composed of Jews from all over the world who had come to Jerusalem for the Passover and the Pentecost feasts (v. 5). Many of those Jews had doubtless been witnesses to the crucifixion and some of them had actually been a part of the mob that cried for Jesus' blood (v. 23). The apostles were the preachers on this great occasion (v. 14). The message they proclaimed was designed to convince their listeners that the Jesus they had crucified was their Messiah, the Son of God (vss. 22–36). This they did by skillful and logical use of the Old Testament prophecies, by openly declaring that they were all witnesses of His resurrection and that He had ascended to His place of absolute authority at the right hand of God.

The reaction of the crowd was immediate; they cried out, asking what they should do, indicating they had most certainly been convinced that Jesus was the Christ (v. 37). Peter's answer to the question of these believers was plain; he told them to repent (turn from their sins) and be baptized (immersed in water) in order to receive remission (forgiveness) of their sins (v. 38). This was not optional, but mandatory if they wished to be forgiven. This was not required of one or some of them, but "every one of you." These commands did not come from mere men, but from Jesus Christ; they were simply preaching what Christ had commanded them to preach (Mat. 28:18–19; Mark 16:15–16; Luke 24:47). It should be noticed that both repentance and baptism are in a like relationship to remission of sins. If repentance is a condition of pardon, then so must baptism be. Conversely, if baptism is not a condition of pardon (as most of the religious world argues), then neither is repentance.

Those who genuinely sought salvation did not argue with these inspired commands but were baptized and added to the church the same day because they were saved (vss. 41, 47). Their number was about 3,000. The Lord began that day to add

believers who repented and were baptized for forgiveness of their sins to His church. He has continued to do this day by day ever since.

This inspired account of the Heaven-ordered conditions of pardon stands in sharp contrast with the religious traditions of men. For the most part, men have been led to believe that they are saved at the moment they merely believe in Christ and that they can later be baptized if they want to join a church. However, in this passage, **after** these people have shown their belief, they are told to repent and be baptized to receive forgiveness. The doctrines of men teach that one can be saved and later join some church. This passage teaches that when one's faith has led him to be baptized, he is at that same moment saved from his past sins **and** added to the church of Christ (vss. 38, 41, 47). Please notice that these people did not profess that they believed that God for Christ's sake had pardoned their sins because they believed in Christ, and then were baptized a week later. Rather, upon evidence of their belief, they were commanded to repent and be baptized unto remission of sins, which they did "in that day", whereupon they were both saved **and** added to the Lord's church at the same time. Please compare what you did to become what you are religiously with what is taught in this great account of conversions.

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