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ACTS 2:38 – PART 1

Following the outpouring of the Holy Ghost in Acts 2:4, a crowd numbering in the thousands were pricked in their hearts to become Christ followers after hearing Peter's spontaneous sermon. They asked in Acts 2:37, ***"What shall we do?"***

Acts 2:38 records Peter's response. ***"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."***

Peter did not yet entirely understand the fullness of salvation as was later evidenced in his thinking that a believer still had to follow Jewish law. (His understanding grew over time.) He spoke that with which he was familiar.

He was familiar with John the Baptist's ministry. John preached repentance. John baptized those who repented as a sign of their confession from sin unto faith. Peter and the other disciples had likewise baptized in water the newly converted followers of Jesus. This is the only thing he knew to do, except that it must now be done in Jesus' name as his followers instead of followers of Jewish law. In so doing, they would receive the gift of the Holy Ghost impartation unto salvation, just like when Jesus breathed upon the eleven disciples in John 20:22 and said to them, ***"Receive ye the Holy Ghost."*** When they did this, they became born again through the impartation of Holy Ghost baptism unto salvation. This is the impartation of the Holy Ghost that 3,000 new converts received that day. It is not necessary to think that all 3,000 received the Holy Ghost baptism of power (Acts 1:8, ***"...ye shall receive power"***) as did the 120 that day in the upper room, with tongues. Although some could have spoken in tongues also, it is not likely as these are two different and distinct works of the Holy Ghost.

The next thing Peter knew to tell them, after repentance, was to be baptized in water just as they had been doing with other converts of Jesus, and as John had done before then.

As I mentioned yesterday, this verse (Acts 2:38) has often been misunderstood causing much controversy and division especially in Pentecostal ranks. Some of the doctrines that have emerged even take on "cult-like" characteristics, especially with a relatively small group of Pentecostals called "Apostolic."

Tomorrow we will look at the misconstrued doctrines of those "Apostolic Pentecostals." We need to recognize error so that we can be careful to separate it from true understanding of the scriptures.