

Verse-By-Verse: The Book Of Acts

Acts 2:40-42

- **“Repent And Be Baptized”**

When Peter finished his sermon with a call to repentance, some in the crowd asked Peter what they should do. He told them plainly, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

To repent and be baptized, someone would have to be “all in”. It was a public step. It was a frank confession that Christ was the long-awaited Messiah. Once the gospel was accepted, persecution would not be far behind.

- **“Save Yourselves From This Corrupt Generation.”: V. 40**

In saying, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” Peter is not breaking new ground. Jesus’ conversations with the religious leaders of his day bear this out. See: Matthew 23:25-26; Luke 11:29-30

Jesus leaves little unsaid as he rebukes the religious leaders of his day for their pride and their rejection of his message of salvation. Jesus not only condemned the religious leaders, but also the rank and file of Israel. See: Luke 10:13-16.

Joel’s prophecy quoted by Peter said only a “remnant” of the whole would be saved. Paul picks up on this in Romans when he writes:

“For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham’s children. On the contrary, “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.” In other words, it is not the children by physical descent who are God’s

children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring." - Romans 9:6-9

Peter is encouraging those who have believed the gospel to separate themselves from those who have not. This is a clear case of Messianic Jews separating themselves from unbelieving Jews. He tells them to "save themselves from this corrupt generation".

- **The Results Of Peter's Message: vv. 41-42**

"Those then who accepted his message were baptized: that day about three thousand persons were added to them. They adhered to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, the breaking of bread, and the prayers." Acts 2:41-42:

It is very likely that as many as 10,000 people could have heard Peter's message that day – assuming the events of Pentecost occurred in one of the Temple courts. When Peter finished his message, some 3,000 Jewish people and no doubt, Gentile proselytes were saved. Following through with Peter's statement, "repent and be baptized", we find the 3,000 were baptized.

Where did they baptize 3,000 converts? Numerous mikvah (self-immersion) pools were available at the Temple. Alternatively, the Pool of Siloam could have been used.

In the very first post-Resurrection baptism, 3,000 people repented and claimed Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah. The news of this event must have spread very quickly throughout the city.

The World Record For Baptisms: September 7, 2019, some 18,272 people from a Church of Christ congregation in the Philippines were baptized in one setting. Six months before the mass baptism, candidates were required to give evidence of accepting Christ. They also had to complete 25 bible lessons and attend worship services.

- **Four Key Characteristics Of The Early Church:** verses 42-44:

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common.”

- **Apostolic Teaching:**

This new faith community committed itself to apostolic teaching. The apostles’ teaching was regarded as authoritative because Jesus had committed this message to them. Throughout the New Testament the apostles will remind their readers and hearers that Jesus committed the Gospel to them and commanded them to teach it:

- 2 Timothy 2:2: “The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” (See also: Titus 1:9; 1 Corinthians 11:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:15; 2 Thessalonians 3:6)

For believers of later generations, the New Testament scriptures form the written deposit of the apostolic teaching. The apostolic succession is recognized most clearly in those churches which adhere most steadfastly to the apostolic teaching.

- **Fellowship With Other Believers:**

Peter’s Pentecost sermon has produced 3,000 new converts. They have all been baptized; there is new sense of community which is characterized by: “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to **fellowship...**”

In the Greek, the word used here for “fellowship” is “koinonia”. It has a strong sense of sharing something mutual. It’s used some nineteen times in the New Testament in different contexts, but Luke is the first one to use this word to describe the Church at Jerusalem.

Koinonia denotes intimate, mutual sharing. We find this word not only

in the context of believers meeting together, but our relationship to God.

I John 1:1-3:

“What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life - and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us. what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.”

The historical/biblical background: Asia Minor, (modern region of Turkey), had been overrun by false teachers who invaded the house churches there and denied the testimony of the apostles. They taught that Jesus was not incarnated – because physical bodies were evil. They also denied Jesus’ eternal existence.

John is stating categorically that the “Word of Life” – Jesus, came as a “flesh and blood” human. The apostle’s testimony was based on first-hand experience. John makes it clear that legitimate “koinonia”-fellowship can only take place when we share the testimony of the apostles about Christ.

- **Fellowship With God:**

“... And indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.”

As believers, we have “koinonia” with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ.” We have an intimate sharing with them – and we can add – also with the Holy Spirit. And what is all of this based on? It’s based on God’s revelation to us in Christ and in the Scriptures.

- **“The Breaking Of Bread And Prayers.”: v. 42**

- **“Breaking Bread”:**

The phrase “breaking of bread” is used in the New Testament in two ways. 1. People sharing an ordinary meal. 2. Lord’s Supper. The context of the New Testament passages normally dictates which is meant.

Etymology: “Breaking of Bread”: A combination of the Greek word “artos”, meaning “bread” or “loaf” and “klasis” which means to “to break” or “to break off pieces”.

Let’s take the two forms of “breaking of bread” and see how they apply in the Scriptures.

1. “Breaking of Bread”- sharing an ordinary meal:

- Jesus’ multiplication of a few fish and loaves of bread to feed a large crowd: Matthew 14:19; 15:36, and Mark 8:6,19.
- After Jesus’ Resurrection, he broke bread with the two disciples from Emmaus (Luke 24:30, 35).
- Acts 27:35: Paul shares a meal with the 275 persons on board a ship.

2. “Breaking of Bread”- The Lord’s Supper.

1 Corinthians 11:23-24: “For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me.”

1 Corinthians 10:14-17 – Paul’s directions on Breaking bread and Drinking the cup: “Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. 15 I speak as to wise men; you judge what I say. Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we

break a sharing in the body of Christ? 17 Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body; for we all partake of the one bread." - I Corinthians 10:14-17

The context of Paul's words in I Corinthians 10:14-17 is about believers avoiding the mistakes of the Exodus Israelites- who created a golden calf to take them back to Egypt. It's a warning against all forms of idolatry but notice the importance of the bread and the cup – symbolizing the Lord's Supper.

Paul uses this to illustrate koinonia – our intimate sharing of spiritual realities. See: I Corinthians 10:16-17: "Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf."

- **The Acts 2 Context:**

The 3,000 new believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the "breaking of bread". If Luke was referring to the ordinary sharing of meals, there would be no reason to emphasize that. However, if he means the Lord's Supper, Luke is referencing something that automatically falls under the category of an intimate sharing of Christ.

- **The Corinthian Problems With Breaking Bread/Fellowship:**

There were some serious problems taking place when the churches at Corinth were meeting for the Lord's Supper. See: I Corinthians 11:20-22

"Therefore, when you meet together, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper, for in your eating each one takes his own supper first; and one is hungry and another is drunk. What! Do you not have houses in which to eat and drink? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? In this I will not praise you."- I Corinthians 11:20-22

The early churches often combined a fellowship meal with the Lord's Supper. At Corinth, this took the form of what was called a koinonia or "love feast". After a time of teaching, the Lord's Supper would be celebrated. Evidently, this was followed by a fellowship meal.

The Problems: 1. Wealthier members did not share with the poorer members. 2. Some members were getting drunk at the meal.

The Irony: The Corinthian believers were supposed to be sharing koinonia with one another, but at the same time getting drunk and disregarding one another.

Jude 12 makes another reference to these koinonia meals, or as he calls them, "agape feasts". Speaking of the same kind of false teachers that John condemned, Jude writes:

"These people are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm—shepherds who feed only themselves. They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted—twice dead." – Jude 12

These passages from Paul and Jude's epistles show us that the early Church did, at times, combine a fellowship meal with the Lord's Supper. The breaking of bread could describe either one – but the decided emphasis in Acts 2:42 is the Lord's Supper.

If we look at what Luke says later in Acts 2:46, we will find breaking bread in the more ordinary context. Luke writes: "Every day they met together in the temple courtyard. They ate meals together in their homes. Their hearts were glad and sincere."

Luke is noting the great sense of fellowship that these early believers had as they met in each other's homes for a meal and a time of fellowship. 2,000 years later, believers are still meeting in one another's homes and sharing meals.

Next time, we will look at more of Luke's descriptions of the early Church.