

# CONVERSION STUDIES

## CONVERSIONS ON PENTECOST

### Example one of thirteen

Acts is the divine record of the carrying out of the great commission of Jesus. The purpose is to make converts to Jesus. Acts may truly be called the "Book of Conversions." The first example of conversion to Christ is that of the people on Pentecost in Acts 2. The place is Jerusalem. Pentecost is the Old Testament Feast of Weeks. On this Pentecost the Holy Spirit, with miraculous manifestations, has fallen upon the waiting apostles (Acts 2:1-4). This is the fulfillment of the promise of Christ. "But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses..." (Acts 1:8),

A great audience is gathered. It was Jewish (Acts 2:5) with some former Gentiles who had converted to Judaism (Acts 2:10). They were from every nation (Acts 2:5). The work of the apostles will be to testify of Jesus "...in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). These were devout men (Acts 2:5). They were careful and cautious in their activities and they recognized the claims of God. They had the mingled fear and love toward God that brought them from distant lands to Jerusalem. Although they were Jews, they spoke different languages. The miraculous power of the Spirit enabled the apostles to speak in such a way as to enable the audience to hear in their own language. They had a similar religious background, but were different in language.

The main speaker on this occasion was Peter (Acts 2:14). He is the one to whom the keys of the kingdom had been entrusted by which the door would be opened to all men (Matthew 16: 13-19). He is qualified to speak because of the guidance of the Spirit (John 16:13). Since this is true, we must accept what Peter says (John 13:20).

Peter begins with an explanation of the mighty events of the day and the speaking in tongues (Acts 2:14-21). Some said the tongues were not language but the gibberish of some drunks. This Peter denies (Acts 2:15). He says the fulfillment of prophecy is taking place (Acts 2:16). Peter then quotes Joel 2:28-32. With explanation

made, Peter turns to what is the theme of all gospel preaching, the life and purpose of Christ. His life was one of teaching and miracles by the power of God (Acts 2:22). Many in Peter's audience had seen. We, however, rely on the testimony of those who saw (Acts 10:39). Peter reminds his audience that they killed Jesus by bringing about His death at the hands of the Romans (Acts 2:23). Death is usually the end of a story, but not with Jesus.

Jesus was resurrected (Acts 2:24). Peter turns again to the Jewish scriptures to prove that God had foretold the resurrection (Acts 2:25-31). Again the Old Testament is used to convince. Even though the Old Testament prophesied the Messiah would be resurrected, that would not prove Jesus was. Peter then claims to be a witness of the resurrection (Acts 2:32). He proves God foretold the resurrection, and then claims that Jesus fulfilled it. He then declares that Christ ascended into heaven (Acts 2:33-35). After His ascension, Christ sent the final evidence for them, the Holy Spirit and His powers to the apostles (Acts 2:33). The tongues were evidence that Peter was a witness as he claimed.

Peter extends his plea for acceptance of Christ. "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified" (Acts 2:36). "Therefore" points to the conclusion to be drawn from the preceding testimony. They should "know assuredly" that Jesus is the Lord and Christ. They may surely believe that Jesus is the long awaited Messiah. The events of the past and present make it impossible to escape the conclusion that Jesus is divine. "Jesus" means savior (Matthew 1:21). "Lord" is a title of dignity showing Him to be King with all authority (Mt. 28:18), and "Christ" means "the anointed" by God to His office as prophet, priest, and king. We plead with all to accept Jesus as the Lord and Christ that by so doing you may be saved (Acts 2:40).

The word of God preached by Peter brought to the hearts of the honest a keen

realization of their sins and an earnest question. "Brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). They felt the violent stabbing of the Word of God in their consciences, and saw the guilt that Peter named against them. "Him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay" (Acts 2:23). They realized the danger of continuing to live with the guilt of sin. "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). They were also conscious of their helplessness. If they had killed the Messiah, what hope was there? What could they do? Even today men can do nothing to be saved except what God tells them. You can never be good enough to go to heaven! You must do what Jesus says (Acts 2:40). The people believed what Peter said and wanted help. They wanted the right answer to their plight, and they wanted it then. Peter replies promptly.

Some preachers would say there was nothing for them to do. They believed, and that saves, according to many modern religionists. Peter was guided by the Spirit and we can accept what he says. The command of God for believers is "repent and be baptized" (Acts 2:38). If you believe in Christ as these; but have never been forgiven, here is what God says. We must accept what Peter says. We are not concerned with what man says, but what God demands. This is not an isolated command, it is a universal "everyone of you." The authority behind it is the authority of heaven. It is commanded "in the name of Jesus Christ." Someone asks, "Why should I be baptized? What is its purpose?" Peter gives the answer. It is "for the remission of sins." "Remission" means the dismissal, release from, or forgiveness of sins. If that is what you seek, as they did, why not do what they were told to do?

Thousands were baptized that day (Acts 2:41,42). They became the spiritual children of God in Christ. "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ" (Galatians 3:26,27). Are you this day in Christ? Do you know Him in the forgiveness of your sins? If not, you can see clearly from this study what God requires of you. Believing with all your heart, repent of your sins, and be baptized for forgiveness. Do not delay. "Save yourselves from this crooked generation" (Acts 2:40).

(B. G. Echols)

# CHURCH OF CHRIST

412 East King Street  
Shippensburg, Pa. 17257