

COMMENTARY ON ACTS 2 :36-38



WHAT OTHERS SAY:

First by: Adam Clarke, LLD, FSA&C

Definition of Confess:

1. To acknowledge or admit.

Acts 2:36: Both Lord and Christ, not only the Messiah, but the Supreme Governor of all things and all persons, Jews and Gentiles, angels and men. In the preceding discourse, Peter assumes a fact which none would attempt to deny, viz, that Jesus had been lately crucified by them. He then, (1) proves his resurrection, (2) his ascension or pouring forth, (3) his exaltation to the right hand of God, (4) the effusion of the Holy Spirit, which was the fruit of his glorification, and which had not only been promised by himself, but foretold by their prophets in consequence of which, (5) it was indisputably proven that this same Jesus whom they had crucified, was the promised Messiah; and if so, (6) the governor of the universe from whose power and justice they had everything

to dread as they refused to receive his proffered mercy and kindness.

v.37 When they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts. This powerful, intelligent, consecutive, and interesting discourse, supported everywhere by prophecies, and corresponding facts left them without reply and without excuse, and they plainly saw there was no hope for them, but in the mercy of him whom that they had rejected and crucified.

What shall we do? How shall we escape these judgements which we now see hanging over our heads?

v.38 Peter said unto them, repent, (humble yourselves before God and deeply deplore the sins you have committed; pray earnestly for mercy and deprecate and displeasure of incensed justice. For a definition of repentance; see in Matt. 3:2; Matt. 21:29; but afterward he repented and went.) and be baptized everyone of you (take on you the public profession of the religion Christ, by being baptized in his name, and thus acknowledge yourselves to be his disciples and servants). (: see Heb. 10: 19-29; The exact order of Acts 2:36-41. *Bill Browning*)

BY DAVID and SEWELL, founders and editors of David Lipscomb College and Gospel Advocate back in the 1800's.

Questions and answers, page 37, Christ himself ordained baptism as the act in which he would be confessed. Mk.-16:16, Heb. 10:22.

Confession, is it Essential? Q. Ask David Lipscomb. His answer, Rom. 10: 8-10; This is the scripture requiring confession. It is addressed to Christians at Rome. Whether it refers to a formal confession before baptism, I somewhat doubt, for the following reasons; In the commission, in its fulfillment on the day of Pentecost, and in the examples of conversion presented in Acts of the Apostles, there is no example of a formal confession being required as a precedent to baptism, unless the case of the eunuch be regarded as such. In

reference to this, it is claimed by the textuary critics generally that the confession there recorded in an interpolation (this insertion was made by a Catholic priest in the year 1727 by the name Aramas. That is how it got into the Greek text.)

David Lipscomb - The context and circumstance would indicate that such a confession was made. It is also clear that Phillip was not seeking a formal confession, but was seeking an evidence of faith. Whatever confession was made came in response to this seeking the natural evidence of faith in the heart is the confession with the mouth. When Phillip said, "If thou believest, thou mayest," the natural response would be: I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, but it was made to manifest the presence of faith, not to make a formal confession. But if this does not require the confession, the singular fact is presented that in the scriptures a condition of salvation is left out of all the precepts and examples concerning remission and to be found only in a reference in a letter to Christians as to what had been required. Then it is necessary that at every step of the religious life, even after one has grown old in the service of the Lord, with the mouth confession must be made unto salvation and, with the heart he must believe unto righteousness. He must live by and walk through faith unto the end. It is just as necessary that man should believe unto righteousness the last day he lives as the first. By faith man is led forward at every step in the path of righteousness and at every step man must confess his faith in the Saviour.

It is necessary that confession of Christ should be made at all times or Christ will not own us, but that any specific or formal confession was made before baptism more than at any other time is not clear. Confession of Christ in our words is necessary. It is necessary in coming to Christ; it is necessary in all the Christian life. I am sure that questions and obedience on the day of Pentecost were an acceptable confession, so at the house of Cornelius and in all other instances, any words or acts that declare to the world that we believe in Christ and trust him as our Savior is a confession. (See Heb. 10: 19-22; Acts 16: 15-16; Acts 10th and 11th chapters, *Bill Browning*).

Is there a formal confession?

David Lipscomb's answer as follows:

Will you please tell me why it is that Church of Christ requires the sinner to make a public confession as a condition of pardon from past sins in the absence of a command to do so in the New Testament?

Answer: I never ask for a formal confession as a condition of forgiveness. I ask "Do you believe" as an assurance of faith in Christ; and unless they believe in Christ, baptism is of no avail. I do not believe a formal confession was required by Jesus or the apostles in order to baptize; nor ought it to be done with that purpose in view; but it is right to require faith in Christ as a condition of baptism and the remission of sins. The most direct way to obtain this is to ask them if they believe in Christ.

Peloubet's Bible Dictionary on Baptism:

He says: Baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is the rite or ordinance by which persons are admitted into the Church of Christ. It is the public profession (or confession) of faith and discipleship. Baptism signifies (1) a confession of faith in Christ, (2) a cleansing or washing of the soul from sins, (3) death to sin and a new life in righteousness.

The command to baptize was coexistent with the command to preach the gospel. All nations were to be evangelized; and they were to be made disciples admitted into the fellowship of the Christ religion by baptism. Matt. 28:19. It appears to have been a kind of transition from the Jewish baptism to the Christian. See Acts 18: 25-27; Acts 19: 1-6. We cannot but draw from this history the inference that in Christian baptism there was a deeper spiritual significance.

Brethren, the following is what Learned Ministers say:

(1) Commentary by B.W. Johnson on Acts 2: 36-38 v. 36
Therefore, look back at what he had said.

v. 37 When they heard this. The conclusion supported by such convincing words before Peter began to speak. They did not understand the signs, but now it was clear to them that they had rejected and crucified the Lord, pricked in their hearts, convicted of their sins, and pierced with sorrow. They believed Peter's affirmation. Their reviled sin of rejecting Christ, overwhelmed with sorrow, they asked, "What shall we do?" Is there any way that such sinners can be pardoned? (Godly sorrow worketh repentance. 2 Cor. 7:10)

v. 38 " Repent and be baptized." For the first time the terms of pardon under the new covenant and the great commission are given; given once for all times, and always the same. The convicted, broken-hearted, sorrowing sinner believing that Jesus is Christ, is to repent and be baptized. Repent, not sorrow, they already sorrowed; but, a change of purpose; the internal change which resolves to serve the Lord. The Greek word repent means a change of mind. The act of obedience in baptism is an outward expression of both faith and repentance in the name of Jesus Christ. Upon the name (revised version) upon the ground of the name in submission to the authority of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. Thus by complying with the conditions just named, they shall receive pardon without faith and repentance nor can be without submission to the will of Christ. This is enough from Bro. B.W. Johnson. Amen.

Sound Doctrine

VOL. 1 by C. R. Nichol and R.L. Whiteside

"What shall we do?" having heard the first sermon and being fully convinced they should by their question, they had surrendered to Christ. These hands were stained in his blood, hearing him cry, "Father forgive them, they know not what they do". No people have ever more thoroughly committed themselves than had these Jews for the crucifixion of Christ. They were overwhelmed by the proof of his divinity as presented by Peter. They were left without a vestige of ground on which to stand. If they were ever a people prepared to prove that Peter did not present the facts, certainly these people were. They were thoroughly convinced of the crime accused

of. Like brave men, honest men, they acknowledged their mistake, their wrong and cried out, "What shall we do?"

The answer: V. 38 "Repent ye, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins." They were commanded to do two things. (1) Repent, (2) be baptized. "Repent ye and be baptized" (They had already heard and believed, and were convinced and were already heard and believed, and were convinced and were convicted and were full of godly sorrow for the crime they had committed. Now full of desire to be forgiven, they had acknowledged him by saying men and brethren, "What shall we do?" Their way of saying, we believe Jesus Christ is the Messiah. "What else must we do?" (Heaven's answer: Repent and be baptized. *Bill Browning*). Now back to Bro. Nichol's answer. This is to be done "in the name of Jesus Christ." Though they had despised, rejected, and crucified Jesus, they must know how they would be saved, do as he desired. The command is plain. "Repent ye and be baptized. . . unto the remission of your sins." Repentance and baptism came before the remission of sins. See the following verses: MK 1:4; LK 3:3; MK 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; and 1 Pet. 3:21.

A Commentary on Acts of the Apostles, by H. Lee Boles

In Acts 2:38, being convicted of the crime of killing the Son of God, and asking them what to do, Peter required of them to do two things. Repent and be baptized. (He was one of the better preachers).

Acts of the Apostles by G. W. McGarvey

A. M. CO. on Acts was said to be the best bible authority in his day, in the English speaking world.

In Acts 2:37. "Now when they heard this they were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" In this exclamation, they tacitly confessed their belief of what Peter had preached. Acts 8:37: and Phillip said, "if thou believeth with all thy heart, thou mayest." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus

Christ is the Son of God." The interpolator obtained the idea which he inserted from such passages as Rom. 10: 8-9; 1. Tim. 6:13; Matt. 16:16-18; which show that such a confession was taken by the apostles and is not improbable that this apostolic custom was still prevalent when the interpolation was made. Now back to Acts 2:37. Since Peter began to speak a change had taken place in their convictions and their feelings. They now believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. "Now when they heard this", this proves the statement that faith comes by hearing, Rom. 10:17 is correct.

V 38 The question "What shall we do?" This is the first time under the reign of Christ this question was asked, and the first time the answer was given. The answer given by Peter on this day of Pentecost, the day in which the reign of Christ on earth began, is the true and infallible answer for all such people since that time. Acts 2:38. Here they are commanded to do two things; first, to repent and second, to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Here they learned their immediate duty and did it and Jesus saved them and added them to His church. See Verses Acts 41 & 47. The above reference to past sins. (A contrast between Acts 2:38 and Acts 3:19. Repent and be baptized. Repent and be converted, or repent and turn, all means the same thing. It shows that baptism is the first act of a penitent believer. See Acts 22:16; Matt. 21 28-29;... but afterward he repented and went. This shows that the first act of a believing penitent is baptism. *Bill Browning*).

H. Leo Boles Commentary on Acts 2:38

... unto the remission of sins: - it seems to be clear after Peter convinced the multitude that they had crucified the Messiah and that God had exalted him and that he was now at the right hand of God, in this state they asked: "What shall we do?" Evidently they were asking what to do to obtain remission of sins. Peter answers them and tells them to do two things, Repent and be baptized. This is to be done by everyone of them, "in the name of Jesus Christ." (or by his authority). Not repent in order to be saved and be baptized because you are saved. One and one = 2. Repent is one thing and

baptism is another. "Repent and be baptized = 2. Acts 3:1. Peter and John went up into the temple to pray. Peter one and John one. Peter and John = 2. Not repent one, confess two, and be baptized three. Don't add to, nor take from God's arrangement, less you destroy yourselves and them that follow you. It took the love of God to arrange this plan of salvation and if we wrest it and pervert it, all will be lost. Let's not blind ourselves from the simplicity of God's plan.

2 Cor. 13:5. Let's examine ourselves by the word and be at peace with God. Not God agree with us. Let's follow in his steps and be one as he teaches us to be. John 17: 20-21. Let's believe it like it is written and have the same spirit. 2 Cor. 4:13. May our God bless and forgive all of us.

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P.S. For the benefit of those who have read the above, I have baptized anyone coming at the time I was preaching from the pulpit without asking them if they believe that Jesus Christ was the Son of God.

Also I signed an agreement to continue the custom: and asked their forgiveness, if I have raised my voice and offended anyone in discussing the confession question.

Question: Would you withdraw from Peter if he was here and preached it like he did then. I believe it now just like he preached it then: in fact, faith comes by hearing the Word of God. Rom. 10-17. The process at Pentecost on Acts 2; was "they heard and believed." They were demanded to believe and they believed what they heard. They were convinced. They were convicted of the crime accused of, and pricked in their hearts. They expressed their desire to be forgiven by saying, Men and Brethren, what shall we do? We admit; we acknowledge that Jesus is the Son of God, by our request, now what shall we do? Heaven's answer: Repent and be baptized. Do two things. It is all summed up in this expression. Save yourself. Thus, they obeyed. Jesus saved them that day, all that obeyed him. The same process today. Jesus will save you. *Bill Browning.*

*Tract Compiled and Prepared by
Bro. Bill Browning*