

WHAT MUST I HEAR TO BE SAVED?

The beginning of the church of Christ is recorded in Acts 2. This chapter also gives the answer to the question, "**What must I do to be saved?**" (37, 38). Verse 40, says: "***And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, 'Be saved from this perverse generation!'***" These "***many other words***" Peter spoke are not recorded in Acts 2, but were spoken before the 3,000 believers were baptized. Therefore, they included information which people need to know before they are baptized. Although we are not told what these other words were, we can learn what people need to hear and understand before they are baptized by looking at Peter's sermon, and also at what other sinners were taught in the New Testament.

Sinners must believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. The main part of Peter's sermon in Acts 2 is to prove that Jesus is the Son of God. One cannot be baptized correctly if he does not understand who Jesus is. Peter showed that Jesus died on the cross, was buried, arose from the dead, and now sits at God's right hand (22-33). When the Ethiopian confessed, "***I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God,***" he showed he had been taught these facts (Acts 8:35-37).

Sinners must believe in the Godhead. Jesus commanded His disciples to "***Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit***" (Matthew 28:19). Before a person can be baptized, he must be taught about the Godhead, the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. Peter taught the Jews in Acts 2 that Christ was delivered up according to the will of God and crucified by the Jews (v. 23). He also taught that the Holy Spirit had been sent from Heaven to reveal the gospel (v. 33), and the gift of the Holy Spirit was received at baptism (v. 38).

Sinners must know about the church of Christ. When a person is baptized, he is added by the Lord to His church (Acts 2:41, 47). He is baptized into the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:13). When Philip preached in Samaria, sinners believed the things he preached "***concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ***" (Acts 8:12). Since the kingdom is the church (Matthew 16:18,19), Philip preached the church to men and women before they were baptized. The church was purchased with the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28). Therefore, it is a part of the Gospel of Christ. Men and women cannot be baptized correctly if they do not understand about the church of Christ.

Sinners must understand that they are lost in sin and need to repent. Those who heard Peter preach on Pentecost day "***were cut to the heart***" by the preaching of the Gospel (Acts 2:37). This was not repentance, but leads to repentance (2 Corinthians 7:10). Peter commanded them to repent before they were baptized (Acts 2:38). We cannot baptize anyone who does not repent.

Repentance requires one to change his life and do good works instead of bad (Acts 26:20). If one is following a religion which is not acceptable to God, he must change. Peter told the Jews to "***Repent, therefore, and be converted that your sins may be blotted out. . .***" (Acts 3:19). The Jews had followed the Law of Moses for centuries. It would be hard for them to give it up, even though it had been fulfilled (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Colossians 2:14; Hebrews 8:6-13). Anyone today who is in a church which is not according to the Bible must change. He must leave the "***doctrines and commandments of men***" and become a member of the church we read about in the Bible.

Repentance also requires one to change his manner of life. When Paul preached to Felix; he “***reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and judgment to come***” (Acts 24:25). Certainly, Peter included these things in the “***many other words***” he preached on Pentecost. Paul's powerful preaching to Felix caused him to be afraid. He was a sinner, but he was not willing to repent. History tells us that Felix's wife, Drusilla, was married first to King Azizus of Emesa, but Felix had persuaded her to divorce her husband and marry him. This is wrong according to the teaching of Jesus (Matthew 19:9; Romans 7:1-3). Therefore, for Felix to repent, he would have to leave his unscriptural marriage. Repentance is the hardest of all the commandments of God! We have no right to baptize anyone who is not willing to turn away from all his sins!

In order for a person to be saved, he must hear the Gospel for “***Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God***” (Romans 10:17). One must hear that Jesus Christ is God's Son who died for our sins. He must hear about the Godhead. He must know about the church of Christ. He must understand what it means to repent. He must be willing to change his religion and manner of life.

The steps to salvation are:

- (1) Hearing the Gospel;
- (2) Believing in Jesus Christ as God's Son;
- (3) Repenting of all past sins;
- (4) Confessing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God;
- (5) Being baptized for the forgiveness of sins (Romans 10:17;
Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; Acts 8:37; Romans 10:9,10; Acts 2:41,47).

The meaning of these steps of salvation were certainly a part of the “***many other words***” Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:40).

Have you heard and understood the Gospel? Then why not obey it today?