

What's Going On? (Part 3 of 3)

“Peter replied, “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.” Acts 2:38

Through the previous two articles in this series, we have discovered that the root cause of the problems in the world today (including the problems in your life) is sin and the only solution to our sin-problem is Jesus. By sending Jesus Christ to be the sacrifice for the sins of the world, God has done for each of us what we could not do for ourselves – provide a way for mankind to overcome the bondage and consequences of sin and be re-connected with our Creator. That’s right! You don’t have to stay in sin and separated from God. You CAN be made righteous in the sight of God. You CAN have a real relationship with God...but how?

In Acts 2:37, after hearing Peter’s message about Christ and recognizing the sin they had committed in crucifying the Messiah, many in the crowd felt a deep sense of remorse, conviction and even fear and cried out to Peter for help. “What should we do??!!”...They wanted to know what they needed to do to appease God for their sin. This is the question that every man, woman and child who understands their sin and wants to please God, should ask. Peter’s instructions to them for dealing with their sin fall in line with the instructions given to them by Christ in Mark 16:15-16 and are the same instructions we must follow today if we want to deal with our sin-problem.

If you believe the good news about Christ, that he died for your sins and was resurrected according to the scripture (Mark 16:15-16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4), your belief must now be demonstrated through your actions. Peter commanded them to REPENT. He wanted them to know that they needed to have a change of mind about their sin and their actions toward God. At one point, the focus of the minds of the people in the crowd was contrary to God’s word. So, in order to please God, they needed to repent. Instead of continuing to walk against God, they needed to change their mind from disobedience to obedience. Unless we repent of our sin (acknowledge that we are in sin and determine to turn from sin to God), we will remain in our sins and separated from God. (Luke 13:3).

While repentance deals with the changing of the mental, the scriptures give us further instructions and examples of what one must do to overcome sin and be saved. In Acts 8:37, after being taught the good news about Christ by Phillip, the evangelist, the Ethiopian government official, acknowledged and proclaimed his faith in Christ by confessing “Yes. I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God”. After making this public confession, Phillip and the Ethiopian went down into some water that was nearby and Phillip followed Christ’s command and baptized him. If you want to be saved from the penalty of your sin, it is essential that you be baptized (immersed in water) as the scripture commands and demonstrates. (Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:36-38).

Once a person obeys God’s instructions for overcoming sin and is baptized, he or she takes on Christ’s righteousness and enters into a covenant relationship with God and becomes a recipient of the spiritual blessings made available to those who are IN Christ. After baptism, the Lord gives the believer His Holy Spirit to dwell in him/her and continue their transformation and preparation. Additionally, the Lord adds that saved person to the body of Christ/church of Christ and asks that they remain faithful to the Lord until death. But, is every church, the body of Christ today?