

Acts 2: 38 *'Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. ³⁹ For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our God shall call.'*

Here, we read: be baptized for the remission of sins. Again, this does not mean that being baptized causes the remission of our sins; it means: be baptized, following Jesus' example of baptism, because of what Jesus did on the Cross, having paid the full price for the remission of all our sins.

The Greek word the Holy Spirit used here is: eis (ice)

In Mark 13:3, we read: *'And as (Jesus) sat **upon** the mount of Olives...'* Mark uses the same Greek word: eis. Jesus is not sitting for the Mount of Olives; He is sitting on/on top of; the mount was there first and then because it was already there, Jesus sat upon (eis) it.

In Acts 2:38: the remission of sins was already there; it was accomplished, fully, by the Lord Jesus Christ upon the Cross. Baptism then sits upon the completed work of the remission of all our sins.

Here, in Acts 2:38 'for' is translated from the same Greek word as: 'upon,' in Mark 13:3.

'Be baptized upon the remission of your sins which was finished upon the Cross.' Jesus said: 'It is finished!'

The promise of the Holy Spirit is for you, your children, to all that are afar off... but then He inserts a major qualifier: *even as many as the LORD our God shall call.* ... in modern English, we would better understand it as: only... *'only as many as the LORD our God shall call.'* The promise is to everyone whom the Lord our God shall call... but only to as many as the Lord our God shall call. To all others, the Lake of Fire awaits!

Jesus is 'the Lord our God.' He said: *'But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. ²⁷ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: ²⁸ And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. ²⁹ My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one.'* John 10:26
And: *'My sheep hear my voice; they hear My call; 'the promise is to: as many as the Lord our God shall call.'*

God's Word is not just some smattering of writings from many different authors; It is one single unified tapestry in which every verse meshes with every other verse because It all has but one single Author: the Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God, having inspired every human scribe to write exactly what the Holy Spirit verbally dictated.

Verse 40: *'And with many other words did (Peter) testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.'*

If that generation was untoward, there is no word to adequately describe our own generation. Many empires and kingdoms have fallen through evil and wicked rulers or through the machinations of spies and traitors; many have fallen by military conquest while still others have been destroyed through moral corruption but there has never been a world power which has been purposely destroyed by its own wicked leadership in concert with the same purposeful destruction of many other kingdoms and empires; nothing like we are now experiencing has ever happened in all of human history... never!... which is one of the many reasons by which we can know with certainty that the return of the rightful King Eternal cannot be far away.

Verse 41: *'Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.'*

Suddenly, in its first day, the True Church numbers about 3120 believers. Imagine trying to organize and direct such a sudden crowd; a few chapters later, we'll see that this did pose real difficulty.

Verse 42: *'And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.'*

These early days of the Church were relatively simple and easy. They taught, they learned, they prayed, they ate together... they listened and learned all that the Apostles taught them; it's all they had; there were no

Gospels, no Acts, no Epistles... all they had was what the Apostles recounted of their years with Jesus and all that He had taught them of which the Holy Spirit was continually reminding them.

Jesus had said: *'These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. ²⁶ But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. ²⁷ Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.'* John 14:26

Verse 43: *'And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.'*

Many wonders and signs were done by whom? By the Apostles. Many today would have us believe that performing great signs and wonders should be done by every 'spirit-filled' believer but does the Word bear that out? It says they were done by the Apostles; it doesn't say by the Apostles and by all the new believers. You'd think that if anyone else could do these things, it would be those who were brought to Salvation and taught by these very Apostles but it doesn't say that... it only says that they were accomplished by the Apostles... why? ... because signs and wonders were mainly for a certain, specific time and purpose; they were done in order to confirm the Truth of all that the Apostles were teaching, that they were speaking the Words of God. When the time came for the end of the Apostles' ministries, all that God intended to be His written Word, their letters and Gospels were completed and being copied and sent out to every group of believers. But... no one had a Bible; all they had was the teaching from a pastor, teachers and traveling evangelists and, many of these did not even have copies of the Apostles' Gospels or Epistles. The only way the True Church could have become established, grown and spread was through the protection, guidance and conviction of the Holy Spirit, through His Inspired Word.

The Bible we have today was not fully compiled until nearly 300 years after John wrote The Revelation which, itself, was one of the last Books to be recognized as God's inspired Word. Church leaders met together in several 'Councils' to eventually settle on what we have today but it's very important to understand: men did not decide on the Canonization of Scripture; God's Holy Spirit directed their thoughts and actions every bit as much as He did in inspiring each Biblical writer. God, alone, decided on the production, preservation and propagation of His Word. What we have in the King James Version of the Bible was not completed until 1611. Remember: Jesus said, *'I will build my Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail (shall not stand) against it.'* His Church, founded upon His Word, would break down the gates of hell; His Word would reach into the very bowels of the kingdom of darkness, pulling out, into light, life and safety, every single person He had chosen for Himself, from the foundation of the World... and every single one is, I believe, a miserable surprise to Satan; as his minions work to entrap and destroy every human, they're suddenly shocked to recognize the moment when God reveals Himself to one person at a time, giving them His gifts of repentance and faith to believe in His Son. What a terrible realization it must be to every demonic spirit when they, in a moment, see how much time they wasted on the one who is now a child of God, a bright light shining out in the darkness of this World.

All of that has been and is being accomplished by God's Holy Spirit through the preaching and teaching of His Holy Word, one believer at a time until the end of this present World... at least 1007 years and one day away (the tribulation plus the millennium and one more day if the rapture doesn't happen today!)

Verse 44: *'And all that believed were together, and had all things common; ⁴⁵ and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, ⁴⁷ Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily **such as should be saved.**'* Some should be saved; others should not be saved; that's just the way it is.

So... some form of socialism, or communism, is actually Biblical... but only so far as is Spirit led. This is not saying that they all lived in a large commune with everyone having sold off all their possessions with the proceeds poured into a central pool of money. We need to see this for what it was: experience and necessity.

For now, it's good times; this short time is, in some ways, the very best times of the Church; everyone was happy; everyone was cared for from the wealthiest to the poorest and all their neighbors liked and accepted them; they ate together, they studied God's Word together, and people were coming to faith with their numbers increasing every single day... every pastor's dream.

But all of that was going to change rather quickly and suddenly.

First, this is all happening in the heart of Judaism: Jerusalem. They will begin to be rejected and ejected from their families, their friends and their employers; Judaism is not kind to 'unbelievers.' Many in Jerusalem were still of the mindset of which they were, several weeks past: they hated Jesus Christ and were more than willing to see Him crucified; nothing had happened to change their minds and hearts. Imagine being a small congregation in the heart of Portland or San Francisco or Iran where no one else is a Christian and they all dislike or even hate you.

Jesus said: *'Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain... If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.*

¹⁹ If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you... If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you... But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.

²² If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin. ²³ He that hateth me hateth my Father also. ²⁴ If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. ²⁵ But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause. ²⁶ But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: ²⁷ And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.' John 15:16

Soon, the Apostles and believers will begin living out all that Jesus told them would happen.

Soon, the believers will be all together because they'll have nowhere else to go; in addition to the Holy Spirit, they'll need to be bound together for strength, encouragement and protection. Some of the believers were relatively well off: Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus among others; as they recognized some brothers and sisters in need, they would sell one of their possessions: jewelry, an antique, land or a house, and then they would deliver the proceeds to the Apostles, the only Church leadership, in order for those moneys to be disbursed according to God's will. None of the Apostles were keeping the money to buy million dollar homes, Rolexes or private jets; their singular focus was on studying God's Word (all they had, at that time, were the Old Testament Scriptures) and on preaching and teaching God's Word while seeing more and more come to faith, every day. This situation was also based on their experience over the past 3.5 years. They had traveled the countryside, together with Jesus; their needs were met either miraculously or through goodwill offerings. Now, the Church was being kept in the same way.

Chapter 3 Verse 1: *'Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour. ² And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple;'*

Peter and John went up to the Temple at 3:00 PM: middle of the day. At one of the gates sits a beggar, lame from birth. Many, today, claim that God's will for us is health and wealth and if you are not so, which is probably the result of hidden sin in your life, then you should give those same false teachers a generous offering for which they will pray for you. This is not a simple mistake in doctrine; this is denying the Truth of God's Word and calling Him a liar.

God personally formed us in our mothers' wombs:

'Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee;' Jer 1:5

Disability is not the result of sin: *'And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. ² And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? ³ Jesus*

answered, *Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.*' John 9:1

On the other hand, sickness/infirmity can be the result of sin; Jesus healed a man who had been sick for 38 years, but not from birth: *'And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. ⁶ When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? ⁷ The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. ⁸ Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. ⁹ And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.'* John 5:5

Later, Jesus sees the same man and says to him: *'Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.'* So, we do see that sickness can be the result of our sin but, certainly, not always so: Paul had an infirmity of his eyes which God refused to heal; God had caused it in order to keep Paul from becoming proud because of all his wonderful revelations from God. Timothy had a problem in his stomach for which Paul advised him to drink small portions of wine.

This man, we see in Acts, healed through the ministry of Peter and John, was sick, also, so that God would be glorified and, that once more, God's Word through the Apostles would be confirmed.

Verse 3: *'(The man), seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms. ⁴ And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. ⁵ And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. ⁶ Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. ⁷ And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.'*

Another amazing and miraculous healing... brought about by God in order to confirm His Word. Peter and John, doubtless, didn't just travel around looking for someone to heal. God directed them to pass by this same man; they had surely passed him a hundred times before but this time was different; this time, God intended to glorify Himself, to confirm the Truth of His Word and to draw those whom He had chosen to eternal Salvation this same day. This time, the Holy Spirit directed Peter to act in faith.

Verse 8: *'And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.'*

This man had been lame from birth; he'd never known anything else except sitting and begging, constantly enduring people's pity and disdain; but suddenly he was completely healed; God even healed all his muscles which had would have become atrophied and worthless... *walking and leaping and, most importantly, praising God!*... not everyone did so.

Verse 9: *'And all the people saw him walking and praising God: ¹⁰ And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him. ¹¹ And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.'*

Everyone saw the result of this miracle. All of Jerusalem recognized this man as the one whom they had so often ignored in passing by, pretending not to see, on their way up and into the Temple and this man knew all of them; he knew who pitied him, who cared about his condition, who helped him, who ignored him and who despised him. In fact, this may be the very person of whom the Pharisees thought when Jesus said that outer darkness awaited those who refused to care, even for *'the least of these, My brethren.'*

God was glorifying Himself through this miracle and next time, we'll see that Peter and John were very careful to give all praise, glory and honor to God.