

The Spirit Speaks -- of the Servant

5A: THE SECRET OF THE CHURCH'S SUCCESS (2:40-47)

2:40-41 What are the assumed qualifications for the baptized?

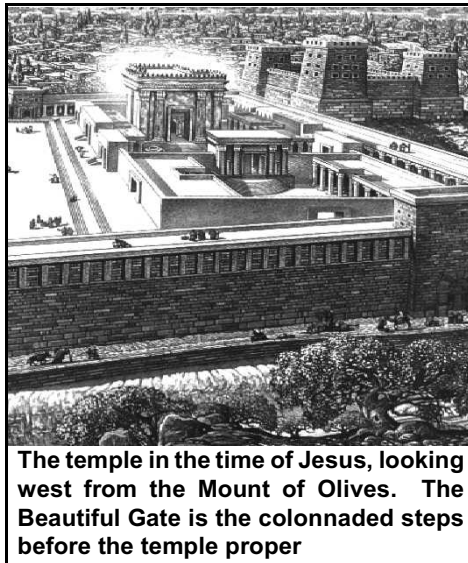
How, then, were the 3,000 baptized? We do not know. The Spirit has withheld the answer. Why? Because the mode is not essential. In order to make it essential the Spirit would have had to state it in plain terms. One mode, however, was not used: immersion. -- **R.C.H. Lenski**, *Acts* p.113

2:42 Remark 4 characteristics of a Spirit-filled fellowship

Is the reference here to the Eucharist, to an Agape, or to an ordinary meal? Perhaps to all 3, if we are to gather from ver. 46 that they took the principal meal of the day in each other's houses, observing the Lord's Supper each time they did so. -- **F.F. Bruce**, *Acts* [Gk] p.100

Yea, he expresseth in this place four marks whereby the true and natural face of the Church may be judged. Do we then seek the true Church of Christ? The image thereof is lively depainted and set forth unto us in this place. And he beginneth with doctrine which is, as it were, the soul of the Church. Neither doth he name all manner of doctrine, but the doctrine of the apostles, that is, that which the son of God had delivered by their hands. Therefore, wheresoever the pure voice of the gospel doth sound, where men continue in the profession thereof, where they exercise themselves in hearing the same ordinarily that they may profit, without all doubt there is the Church. -- **John Calvin**, *Acts*, p.126

Is it enough just "to repent and be baptized?" Yes -- and no. It is enough to receive God's pardon. But the New Testament makes clear the fact that there should be



The temple in the time of Jesus, looking west from the Mount of Olives. The Beautiful Gate is the colonnaded steps before the temple proper

growth in the Christian life. This is underscored right at the outset (2:42), for those who were baptized devoted themselves to the things that produce Christian growth: apostolic doctrine, fellowship with other Christians, the Communion, and prayer (2:42).

-- **W.S. LaSor**, *Church Alive* p.53

... the ideal of a Church's inner life, which in the divine order should precede, and be the basis of, a Church's work in the world ... You will never be strong Christians, you will never be happy ones, until you make conscience of the study of God's Word and 'continue steadfastly in the Apostles' teaching.' You may produce plenty of emotional Christianity, and of busy and sometimes fussy work without it, but you will not get depth. I sometimes think that the complaint of the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews might be turned upside down nowadays. He says: 'When for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles.' Nowadays we might say in Sunday-schools and other places of church work: 'When for the time ye ought to be learners, you have taken to teaching before you know what you are teaching, and so neither you nor your scholars will profit much.' The vase should be full before you begin to empty it. -- **Alexander MacLaren**, *Expositions: The Acts of Apostles* pp.80,83

2:43 Remark too the dominant mood of a church where God is present

The imperfect denotes that the fear which fell on all who heard the words of Peter was no momentary panic, but continued to be a feature of the days that followed. -- **F.F. Bruce**, *op.cit.*, p.100

You know, I am always rather suspicious of persons who receive the Word with gladness and joy. One wonders if the Spirit of God has really done His probing work in the conscience. We would rather see men facing their sins before God. That is what is involved -- a changed attitude toward self, a changed attitude toward sin. That makes people serious, thoughtful; sober; it makes people sad. -- **Harry Ironside**, *Acts* p.74

2:44-47 In what sense were early believers no part of the world? (John 17:13-18)

And they also celebrated the holy sacrament of the new covenant in smaller circles, circumspectly and retiredly, *from house to house* (kat oikon) ... -- **Rudolf Stier**, *The Words of the Apostles* p.40

Clearly the church had no thought of separation from temple Judaism. The expulsion was to come from the hierarchy, who had closed the synagogues to Christ and were similarly to reject Paul. -- **E.M. Blaiklock**, *op.cit.*, p.28

It was not God's will that the new spirit should violently break with the old letter. Convulsions are not His way, except as second-best. The disciples had to stay within the fold of Israel, if they were to influence Israel. The time of outward parting between the Temple and the Church was far ahead yet. -- **Alexander MacLaren**, *op.cit.*, p.66

Taken as a whole, the people of the city thought well of all these disciples. Their fervor in the Temple worship commended them, and their happy conduct with praise to God on their lips made the Jews like them. -- **R.C.H. Lenski**, *op.cit.*, p.121

5B: COMMON GROUND -- Literally & Spiritually (3:1-18)

3:1-11 How is Peter in a position of strength from which to address an unbelieving audience? (Heb.2:1-4)

Only a few months before Jesus had passed by that gate. He must have seen the beggar many times; it is quite likely that the beggar had asked Him for alms. Why had Jesus not healed him? For one reason, Jesus did not come in His First Advent to heal all diseases. But in this case there was a second reason: Jesus had reserved this man's cure for the time when He would be working not in the flesh but in the Spirit through His apostles. -- **W.S. LaSor**, *op.cit.*, p.58

3:12-15 How does the Holy Spirit consider the sensitivities and spiritual level of both speaker and audience? (particularly in the use of Messianic titles) (John 16:12-14; Heb.5:11-14)

The particular interest of this sermon lies in the way in which it gives further teaching about the person of Jesus, describing him as God's servant, the Holy and Righteous One, the Author of life and the prophet like Moses. This indicates that a considerable amount of thinking about Jesus, based on study of the Old Testament, was taking place. -- **I. Howard Marshall**, *Acts of the Apostles* p.90

In speaking of the exaltation of Jesus, following His humiliation and death, Peter used language taken from the prophecy of the obedient and suffering Servant of the Lord in Isa. 52:13-53:12, a prophecy which opens with the words "Behold, my servant shall ... be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high." The voice from heaven which came to Jesus at His baptism addressed Him in the language of Isa. 42:1, where this figure of the Servant makes its first appearance. No passage of OT prophecy has made so deep and plain a mark on NT thought and language as this. -- **F.F. Bruce**, *The Book of Acts* p.88

The identification of Jesus as the Servant found in 3:26; 4:27,30. These are the only places in the New Testament where the name is applied to him, but the prophecies about the suffering of the Servant are cited or alluded to in Mark 10:45; 14:24; Luke 22:37; John 12:38; Acts 8:32f; 1 Peter 2:22-24; and elsewhere. This combination of references suggests a primitive understanding of Jesus which is remarkably absent from the Letters and later writings. -- **I. Howard Marshall**, *op.cit.*, p.91

This early sermon of Peter's, to the people, is marked by a comparative absence of the highest view of Christ's person and work. It is open to us to take one of two explanations of that fact. We may either say that the Apostle was not learning the full significance of the marvellous events that had passed so recently, or we may say that he suited his words to his audience, and did not declare all that he knew. -- **Alexander MacLaren**, *op.cit.*, p.104

5C: CONTROVERSY, CONVICTION -- WITH CONCILIATION (3:13-21)

to conciliate -- to overcome the distrust or hostility of, by soothing or pacifying means; placate, win over

3:13-19 How is Peter the perfect person for the Spirit's use with this particular subject and situation?

3:20,21 Until when will Messiah remain in heaven?

The 'times', therefore, refer not to the period before the parousia during which the various prophetically foretold events which must precede it must take place, but rather to the period of fulfilment of the prophecies concerned with the parousia itself. -- **I. Howard Marshall**, *op.cit.*, p.94

What, for us, is the teaching of this address, delivered so distinctly and particularly to the house of Israel? It seems to me there are 3 lessons as to the economy of God. First, that His ancient purposes are unchanged; secondly, that the restoration of all things waits the Advent of Jesus; and thirdly, that this will be the time of the recovery of Israel. -- **G. Campbell Morgan**, *Acts* p.91

5D: CONTINUITY: New Light, but No Break with Past (3: 20-26)

3:22-26 Though Peter has the common ground of shared experience (i.e. the miracle), shared culture, shared worship and shared sin, on what does he rest most of his argument? (Paul too -- 24:14;26:22)

A repeated note in all 3 chapters so far is the relevance of the Old Testament. "Salvation," said the Lord, "was of the Jews" (John 4:22), and this is what he meant. Tear the Old Testament out of the New, and very little is left. Christ, to be sure, broke suddenly into history; but that saving intrusion, had the Scriptures been read aright, had been from the beginning foretold. The Holy Spirit now made it crystal clear, and Peter is reaping the harvest of a lifetime's pondering, reading, and memorizing the ancient oracles. He demonstrates, in fact, the duty which lies upon a Christian to store the mind with God's word. It is thus that guidance, inspiration, insight, and understanding can come. When God's will and message stand revealed the slothful and inattentive can hardly expect a special communication. -- **E.M. Blaiklock**, *op.cit.* p.34

NEXT: AUTHORITY or AUTHORIZATION?