

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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AN INVITATION

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I don't do well in crowds. It is extremely difficult for me to speak in public, especially in front of a large audience. Having said that, if I were to speak to a group, say, to offer the invitation I would start with Acts 2:38. Let us look at the passage and determine what Peter said we should do to be saved.

The King James and the Revised Standard versions of the Bible point out with little or no differences in the text of Acts 2:36 that “*all the house of Israel*” are told that the man that they knew and crucified as Jesus, God had made both Lord and Christ.

This statement and the knowledge that the act of crucifixion had occurred assuredly moved people in different ways. If the statement were true there could have been *fear*. The fear of a retaliatory God. The fear that because of actions taken as a mob the consequences could be devastating to mankind. The fear that their world could change for the worse in the twinkling of an eye.

If the statement were true there could be *indifference*. Peo-

ple with a hardened heart, people, as people are today, who don't care about anything spiritual, who feel that life is to be lived right now at any cost, with no care because they don't feel or believe in tomorrows, the afterlife or Heaven.

But as stated in Acts 2:37, at hearing this, there was a group of people who were *pricked in their hearts*, or cut to their hearts. Obviously the feelings of shame and remorse had overcome many of them, and they asked Peter, “What shall we do?”.

This will bring us to Acts 2:38, where Peter said to them, “*Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness or remission of your sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*”

Webster defines “Repent” as: (A) to turn from sin and dedicate oneself to the amendment of one's life. Amendment is the act of amending or correction. (B) To feel regret or contrition. (C) To change one's mind.

“Repent” in Acts 2:38 reflects all three of these definitions. They, the group of people who had

been pricked in their hearts, were asked to turn from sin. After all, they had crucified Christ,. They were asked to change their minds, and their hearts.

These people were directed to be baptized. They were immersed in water, to be washed clean of sin, to feel the joy of a clean forgiven heart and mind, and to arise and walk in the newness of life.

Now they, the repentant and baptized group, received the gift of the Holy Spirit. They had the gift of knowing that they would have the blessings, the feelings of well being, and the knowledge that they would enter the kingdom of heaven when the Lord came again, if they remained true to the teachings of Christ.

If we do these “acts” in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins; if we continue to believe and act as Christ has instructed us, we will have the knowledge that we too can have a home in the kingdom of God. (*Article adapted to conform to space restrictions- JF*)