

Question: "What does Acts 3: 19 have in common with Acts 2: 38?"

Today we will examine Acts 3:19, which is part of Peter's second recorded gospel sermon to His fellow Jews (Ac 3:11 - 4:1). Last week, in our study of Acts 2:38, we discovered that repentance and water baptism are for the remission of sin and by the authority of Jesus Christ. Moreover, we learned that the promise of the Holy Spirit awaits those who obey the word of Christ in this way. Let us begin by setting forth the passages under consideration:

Acts 2: 38 – *Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*

Acts 3: 19 – *"Repent therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord."*

"Repent..." – Once again, as in Acts 2:38, Peter commands repentance in Acts 3:19. Repentance is a turning from sin with a desire to do God's will. He adds the word "therefore," because they must repent for participating in the murder of Jesus the Christ, even though they did it in ignorance (3:14-18). "Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers" (Ac 3:17). The command to repent also applies to us today, since it was also our sins which caused Jesus to be crucified (1Co 15:3; He 2:9).

"And be converted..." – This expression literally means "and turn". The corresponding portion of Acts 2: 38 says, "and be baptized..." It is in baptism that one formally "turns" to God. Forgiveness of sins is associated with turning "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God in Acts 26:18. Furthermore, forgiveness of sins is also linked to belief, repentance, baptism and conversion as seen in our study texts (Ac 2:38 and Ac 3:19). Therefore, water baptism, preceded by faith and repentance, marks the point in time when a person is truly converted to Christ (cf. Romans chapter 6).

"That your sins may be blotted out..." – The corresponding phrase in Acts 2:38 says, "for the remission of sins." "Remission" means to release; "blotted out" means to smear or wash completely (W. E. Vine). Hence, Saul of Tarsus was told to, "...arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins..." (Ac 22:16). "Blotted out" means that God will no longer remember those sins (cf. He 8:8-13; 10:1-3).

"So that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord." – This expression is parallel to "the gift of the Holy Spirit" in Acts 2:38. The word "refreshing" suggests relief. What a beautiful description, this statement is, of salvation in general.

Luke, the writer of Acts, not only recorded what Peter said on these two occasions (Acts chapters 2 and 3), but also the response of the audience to his message. On the first occasion, "those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them" (Ac 2:41). Following his second speech, "many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand" (Ac 4:4). These two divinely inspired gospel sermons resulted in many souls being added to Christ wherein is salvation (Ac 2:47). However, many more rejected the gospel and the hope it offers. In which group do you find yourself today?

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