

Introduction:

1. Many people who call themselves “Christians” chastise us for teaching the plan of salvation as laid out in the Bible.
 - a. In times past, true Christians were made fun of, being called “five-steppers.”
 - b. They accuse us of negating God’s grace by saying that baptism [a work] is necessary for salvation.
 - c. They say that since there is no passage or section of Scripture that lists the five steps of salvation, we are just making it up.
 - i. To paraphrase Rubel Shelly, “preachers are stringing Scriptures together like pearls on a necklace.”
 - ii. He was making fun of preachers who know where to go in the Bible to show what things are essential to becoming a Christian.
 2. Brethren, let me be completely clear and honest with you.
 - a. There is no singular verse in the Bible that lays out the need to hear, believe, repent, confess, and be baptized in order to become a Christian.
 - i. You may search until your dying day, and you will not find it.
 - b. Do you want to know why?
 - i. Because there were no Christians before Jesus died (thus you won’t find it in Matthew-John).
 - ii. Because every book from Romans through Revelation was written to people who had already become Christians, thus they did not need to be taught how to become one.
 - iii. Really, this leaves only the book of Acts for us to go to, and nowhere did Peter or Paul get up and say, “here’s what you’ve got to do: hear, believe, repent, confess, and be baptized.”
 3. BUT.....we can go to a SECTION of Scripture and read it through, and find all those things happening.
 - a. And conveniently enough, it is the first time that the gospel was presented by the apostles.
 - b. Turn in your Bible to Acts 2.
 - c. Peter begins his sermon by quoting a prophecy from Joel, and ends it with “whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”
 - d. Since people were being saved by the end of Acts 2 (see verse 47), we should be able to look through and see what they did in order to be saved.
 - e. Then we will know, without a doubt, what “calling on the name of the Lord” means and how we can be saved.
- I. Peter commanded the people to hear (Acts 2:22-24).
- a. After getting the people’s attention, the Holy Spirit inspired Peter to tell them “HEAR these words...” (Acts 2:22).

- i. Their attention had been gained by the sound of the mighty rushing wind (Acts 2:2).
 - ii. Perhaps the tongues of fire still resided upon the apostles as they spoke (Acts 2:3).
 - iii. They were speaking in various languages, so that the people could understand (Acts 2:4).
 - iv. Then Peter stood up amongst all of them and said, “hearken to my words” [basically, “listen up!”](Acts 2:14).
 - v. Then again, he clearly states, “men of Israel, HEAR these words” (Acts 2:22).
 - b. What words were they to hear?
 - i. Continue reading: “Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands you have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it” (Acts 2:22-24).
 - ii. Peter told them they needed to hear about the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ!
 - iii. Paul said that the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ was the gospel (I Corinthians 15:1-4).
 - iv. So, Peter commanded the people on the Day of Pentecost to hear the gospel!
 - c. Peter continued in his sermon to prove that Jesus did indeed rise from the dead and ascended into heaven (Acts 2:32-35).
 - d. They also had to hear that Jesus is the Christ, the promised Messiah, the Son of God, because upon this rock-solid fact Jesus would build His church (Acts 2:36, Matthew 16:16-18).
- II. They people believed (Acts 2:37).
 - a. When the people heard that they had put Jesus Christ—the promise Messiah—to death, they were pricked in the heart (Acts 2:37).
 - i. Does one get cut to the heart over something he doesn’t believe?
 - ii. If these people did not believe that Jesus was the Christ, they would not have been affected this way.
 - iii. Instead, they would have felt emboldened because they felt that they put to death an imposter who was falsely claiming to be from God.
 - iv. The fact that they were pricked in their heart PROVES that they believed what Peter was preaching.
 - v. We went over this chapter at the prison a few months ago, and I asked the women there after reading this verse, “did they believe what Peter was saying?” and every one of them could see that belief was there.
 - b. When the people heard that they had put Jesus to death, they asked, “men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37).

- i. You do not ask how to rectify something if you do not believe anything happened.
 - ii. The fact that they asked what they needed to do shows that they believed what Peter was preaching.
 - c. There is absolutely no doubt that these people heard the gospel and believed it.
- III. They Confessed their belief (Acts 2:37).
 - a. Confession is speaking out about something that is personal to you.
 - i. You cannot confess about someone else. That is called gossip.
 - ii. When you confess, you are acknowledging something about you, personally.
 - iii. So, when Jesus says he will confess us before the father if we confess Him before men, it means Jesus is making a personal admission of His relationship with us.
 - b. Looking back at the same verse, we see that they verbally acknowledged their belief that Jesus was the Christ.
 - i. They said, after being pricked in the heart, “what shall we do?”
 - ii. This was a verbal acknowledgement of their belief in what Peter had just finished saying.
 - iii. They were confessing their personal belief that Peter was speaking the truth about Jesus.
 - c. No, we are not given a clear-cut statement that they said, “we believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God” like Peter gave in Matthew 16:16.
 - i. But being pricked in the heart (showing they believe) and then asking what they needed to do is a confession of belief in what was just said.
 - ii. They did indeed confess Christ in front of thousands by their question.
- IV. They were commanded to repent (Acts 2:38).
 - a. Peter, after seeing that they had listened, realizing they believed it by their question, told them that they were still not saved from their sins.
 - i. It seems that most of the religious world wants to declare the 3,000 souls saved before Peter ever answered them.
 - ii. If belief is all that is necessary, then they would be right.
 - iii. They asked, “what shall we do?”
 - iv. Peter’s answer was NOT “you don’t have to do anything, you are already saved!”
 - v. Peter gave them further instructions for them to rid themselves of sin.
 - b. Peter told them they still needed to repent.
 - i. This may seem obvious to us, but imagine for a moment that you are blindsided by something you didn’t realize you had done, and now you are searching for a way to make things right.
 - 1. This is the condition these people were in.
 - 2. They thought they had been doing God’s will by putting to death an imposter who claimed falsely to speak in the name of God.

3. Instead, they realized that he was telling the truth the whole time, and that they had murdered him.
 - ii. They were commanded to turn away from their sins, and turn to following Jesus Christ.
 1. Murder was the most obvious of their sins.
 2. But remember that these were devout men (Acts 1:5) who had come to Jerusalem to worship God.
 3. These were the perfect first converts, because they were already seeking to be right with God.
 4. They understood the importance of repentance.
 - c. So thus far, Acts 2 clearly states that in order to be saved, one must hear the gospel, believe it, confess it, and repent of their sins.
 - V. They were commanded to be baptized (Acts 2:38).
 - a. Peter commanded that in addition to repenting, they must be baptized so that their sins might be forgiven.
 - i. Literally, Peter says “be baptized, every one of you, into the remission of sins...”
 1. The first printings of the NIV (before the 1984 update) translated the verse, “be baptized, every one of you, so that your sins may be forgiven.”
 2. It doesn’t get much clearer than that.
 3. But, because the Baptists and some other groups threw a fit and said they would boycott the translation over that passage, the Bible publisher changed it to “for the forgiveness of sins...” in all subsequent printings.
 - ii. The exact same phrase is used when Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper: this is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for many FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS (Matthew 26:28).
 1. If, as Baptists and others claim, Acts 2:38 says “be baptized because your sins have been forgiven,” then Jesus died for nothing.
 2. The exact same phrase (in Greek and English both) is used, and if it means “because your sins have been forgiven,” then Jesus said, “this is my blood in the New Testament which is shed for many because their sins are already forgiven.”
 3. If their sins were already forgiven, then why did Christ die on the cross?
 4. There is absolutely NO way that Acts 2:38 means “be baptized because your sins are already forgiven.”
 - iii. If, as is claimed, baptism is because sins are already forgiven (and therefore is optional), then repentance is optional as well, because they are told to repent AND be baptized.
 1. Both are pre-requisites to the forgiveness of sins, according to the Bible.
 - b. The people were told to do two things, but interestingly enough, one of them is active (repent) and the other is passive (be baptized).

- i. Baptism is not a work of man, because it is something done TO him.
 - ii. He is baptized by someone else.
 - iii. Baptism is a work of God, an operation of Him to remove our sins (Colossians 2:12).
 - iv. Without this WORK of God, we are still dead (Colossians 2:13).
- c. Those who gladly received the teaching (heard it, believed it, and were ready to do what was necessary to be right with God) were baptized (Acts 2:41).

Conclusion:

1. A simple, honest reading of Acts 2:22-38 will show the need to hear the gospel, believe it, confess that belief, repent of your sins, and be baptized in order to have those sins forgiven.
2. Those that gladly received the word were baptized, and then were added (Acts 2:41).
 - a. To what were they added?
 - b. They were added to the church (Acts 2:47).
 - c. But more than that, they were SAVED (Acts 2:47)!
 - d. So, according to ONE PASSAGE of Scripture, hearing the gospel, believing it, confessing it, repenting of your sins, and then obeying the gospel in baptism will save you.
 - e. "all those who call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" means obeying the gospel.
3. We could go to other passages which say things such as...
 - a. Faith cometh by hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17).
 - b. We are made children of God by faith (Galatians 3:26).
 - c. Confession is made unto salvation (Romans 10:10).
 - d. Repent ye therefore (Acts 3:19).
 - e. And now why tarriest thou, arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord (Acts 22:16).
4. Won't you please do that now?