

StraitWay



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“For” As Used In 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” (Acts 2:38 KJV). Did Peter tell the people to be baptized in order to have their sins forgiven or did he tell them to be baptized because their sins were already forgiven? Religious people have disagreed about this for many years. The points of discussion are (1) what the Bible says about “when an alien sinner is saved,” (2) the grammar of Acts 2:38, and (3) the meaning of the word “for.”

When Is An Alien Sinner Saved?

Universalism says that all men will be saved. So really what difference does it make when an alien sinner is saved? If Universalism is true, it doesn't make any difference. Others say that an alien sinner is “...justified by faith only...” (Methodist Discipline, p 73, 1948 edition) and “...solely through faith in Christ...” (Baptist Manual, Hiscox, p. 62), or at the point of faith (B. L. Sparks, Bonner/Sparks Debate), still others believe that the Bible teaches that the alien sinner is saved from his past sins when he is baptized (immersed) in water in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38).

Many passages teach the necessity of faith: John 3:16; John 8:24, Mark 16:16; Acts 16:30,31. Truly, alien sinners are justified by faith (Rom. 5:1). The question then comes: What believer is saved from past sins and when is that believer saved from past sins?

The believer has the right to become a child of God (John 1:11,12) for Jesus is the author of eternal salvation to those who obey Him (Heb. 5:9; Gal.5:6). It is the obedient believer who will be saved. Hence, Jesus said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mk. 16:16). Further, Saul was told, “And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16). Saul, believed on the road to Damascus, but had his sins washed away after he was in the city three days (Acts 9:9).

The Grammar of Acts 2:38

In the Warren/Ballard Debate, Mr. L. S. Ballard introduced the idea that repent (second person plural) and be baptized (third person singular) “...cannot have the same subject or nominative....Peter was saying to all those who repented into life, ‘everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins,’ not in order to obtain the remission of sins...” (p. 146). Consider the comments of some noted grammarians.

1. “Marvin K Franzmann, Concordia Seminary, ‘As regards the expression in Acts 2:38, it is grammatically possible to connect ‘eis aphesin’ with both verbs.” (Warren/Ballard Debate p. 163).

2. “J. W. Wilmarth, a great outstanding Baptist scholar, ‘This interpretation compels us’--that is, to try to separate the two verbs--“either to do violence to the construction, or to throw the argument or the course of thought in the context into complete confusion. Indeed we can hardly escape the latter alternative if we choose the former. For those who contend for the interpretation ‘on account of remission’ will hardly be willing to admit that Peter said ‘Repent’ as well as ‘be baptized on account of remission of sins.’ This is too great an inversion of natural sequence. Yet to escape it we must violently dis sever ‘repent’ and ‘be baptized’ and deny that ‘eis’ expresses the relation of ‘repentance’ as well as ‘baptism’ to forgiveness of sins. But the natural construction connects (Continued on next page)

Word Studies

Partiality

James admonished, "My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality." (James 2:1). The Greek noun "prosopolempsia," rendered "partiality" or "respect of persons," is an interesting word. It is a compound word formed by combining the noun "prosopon,"--literally, "face," and by extension the general outward appearance of an individual--with "lambano," a very common Greek verb that has the basic meaning, "to take, lay hold of, select, receive." One should not be a "face-chooser." James gives a precise illustration of it: A well-dressed, apparently wealthy man visiting the synagogue is warmly received, while another visitor in more humble clothing is treated shabbily. (James 2:2-9)

The problem which James addressed is one that is universal. Man has this tendency to judge individuals by what we see of their outward circumstances. The Law of Moses prohibited such judgment: "You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty." (Leviticus 19:15). In fact, this passage and several others in the Old Testament use the expression as did James. The Hebrew idiom would be literally, "take the face." Proverbs 18:5 states, "It is not good to accept the person [face] of the wicked, to overthrow the righteous in judgment."

"Face-choosing" by judges in courts is despised by all morally upright people. When a judge (or juror) favors the wealthy, the powerful, the popular, those of a certain political party or race, etc., to the point that he leans in their favor in his decisions, we know that justice has been corrupted. Basing his decision on pity for the poor or sympathy for the "underdog" would be just as corrupt and contemptible. James charges the private "face-taker" with that same despicable behavior, asking, "Have you not...become judges with evil thoughts?" (James 2:4). His expression "evil thoughts" means that something besides the law and the facts are being used to render judgment.

We might be quick to assert that we would not take preference for an apparently wealthy visitor over one whose clothes are worn and out of style. That's good! But James described the poor man's clothes as "vile," which means "filthy." What if the man does not smell as sweet as we do? Can we still receive him warmly, and not be "face-takers" judging on outward appearances rather than the intrinsic worth of a human soul?

Biases against those of certain races or nationalities are a common problem in our world. Racial and national differences are often accompanied by cultural differences, as well. Men show their tendency to prefer others who are more like themselves. When such preference leads a man to show less hospitality, interest, and love toward one of another race or background, he shows himself to be a "face-taker," a respecter of persons. Our God does not show such partiality (Deuteronomy 10:17; Acts 10:34), and it should not be found among His children. According to James, such partiality is sin; it is not merely a matter of poor attitude or "room for growth."

Racial and cultural differences between Jews and Gentiles in the first century were considerably greater than differences between races and ethnic groups in America today, and yet in the church they had to be overcome. Jews and Gentiles received one another as brothers, members of the same family. We are bound by the will and love of our Father to invite, welcome, and teach those who are of another race or nationality or economic status than our own just as readily as we do those who are like us. To do otherwise is "face-choosing," and it is sin.

First Principles

A Candid Look at Baptism, Number Two

Our previous article under this topic gave attention to THE ACTION OF BAPTISM and THE DESIGN OR PURPOSE OF BAPTISM. In this we will notice two other facets of this very important Biblical subject. We'll consider the proper candidate for and the administrator of baptism.

THE PROPER SUBJECT OR CANDIDATE FOR BAPTISM: The New Testament speaks to this matter with such clarity and simplicity, one wonders how there could be confusion regarding it. As is generally the case, the confusion results from ideas advanced by man, not from what the scriptures say. A couple of references will suffice to illustrate our point. The **Discipline of the Methodist Church** states, "Let every adult person, and the parents of every child to be baptized, have the choice of sprinkling, pouring, or immersion." Then follows "*The Order for the Baptism of Infants.*" (1956 edition, page 545). The **Manual, Church of the Nazarene** in *Articles of Faith, XIII Baptism*, says that "baptism...is to be administered to believers..." and then in the next paragraph says "Baptism being the symbol of the New Testament, young children may be baptized, upon request of parents or guardians..." (1948 edition, pages 30-31). From these quotes it is apparent that some teach that believing adults as well as infants and young children are candidates for baptism. Let's let the word instruct us.

In the great commission Jesus said, "Go therefore and make disciples (teach all nations, KJV) of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Mat. 28:19). Mark's account reads, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mk. 16:15-16). Those who are to be baptized are those who are taught and who become believers. Those who on Pentecost were cut to the heart by Peter's preaching were told to "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..." (Acts 2:38). These were hearers who were old enough to so reason and understand that they could be "cut to the heart" and ask, "what shall we do?" They were sinners who were told they needed to repent. Infants and young children do not satisfy this description of candidates for baptism.

WHO MAY ADMINISTER THE BAPTISM OF THE NEW TESTAMENT? Denominational creeds, manuals and disciplines speak of those who are "licensed" or "ordained" being "vested with authority to administer the sacraments", one of which they consider to be baptism. A human board or agency does this licensing and ordination. However, nothing of its kind is found in the New Testament.

Interestingly no emphasis is given in the New Testament to the administrator of baptism, the person actually performing the act. The emphasis there is upon the candidate or subject of baptism. The administrator in the given instances of baptism recorded in the New Testament is mentioned only in the sense of one who assists the candidate in his obedience. The efficacy of baptism does not rest upon the person doing the baptizing, but upon the one being baptized. "God be thanked that you were servants of sin, yet you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered" (Rom. 6:17). "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized..." (Acts 2:38). Such individuals are those who have "purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit...having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever..." (I Pet. 1:22-23).

Friend, have you obeyed the Lord in baptism? Have you thus "put on Christ" (Gal. 3:28)? If not, won't you do so? There are many that would be glad to assist you.

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Personal Work

Maintain a positive mental attitude. Be cheerful, considerate, optimistic, firm and urgent. Master the plan of salvation and needed passages on the subject. Also, study the New Testament church. It's marks of identity and passages. You must study passages on sin and those showing the gospel as the remedy.

If you don't know what the prospect believes, then ask some questions and get him to talking. If you don't know how to meet and answer some of the error he holds, then use that to advantage and ask for an opportunity to meet again and discuss it when you have had time to study the question more. Always insist that you want to study with him what the Bible says, not what you believe.

To get an appointment, necessary groundwork must be laid. Sometimes religious discussions on the job, or in the family circle may open the door. Sometimes other sources (such as a social visit) may introduce the subject of the Bible. In case of visitors to services, a letter telling them their visit was appreciated, then a short call at the home, with an effort made before leaving to set up a definite appointment for a Bible study there at a specified time. Be definite, have a time ready to suggest. Above all, ask for the appointment.

After a few minutes of polite conversation on general things, you might ask, "Can we talk about the scriptures now?" or "Have you given much thought to where your soul will spend an eternity?"

In a personal Bible study, have each person being taught with a Bible in his or her hand and let them read the passages themselves which you are going to use in study. Untaught people may have trouble finding passages quickly. You or someone may aid in this by quickly finding the passages and trading Bibles back and forth with the party.

The dining or kitchen table is a good place to study, so you can write on a scratch pad as you go along. This cast you in a familiar role where you are less likely to be considered a stranger. After all, you are sitting at their table. Don't be afraid to ask, when you are ready to begin the study, "Would it be all right if we sit at the table to talk about this. It will be easier to see and I might need a place to jot down a few things or illustrate as we study.

Begin the study with a prayer. You need God's help, and the people need to know that you do not take this opportunity lightly. Remember the prospect's name and call it several times as you go along. Always express thanks for the hospitality extended you and for this opportunity to study with honest-hearted people the Words of Life.

Don't be afraid to point out error. The idea of "never condemn another religion" is contrary to the teaching of Christ and His apostles. Error must be answered. Always stress, "Let's see what the Bible says about that."

Don't allow yourself to become angry, or even appear so. You are trying to teach a soul so it can be saved.

Evidence: What Saith the Evolutionists?

"*Bones of Contention; Controversies in the Search for Human Origins*," by Roger Lewin, Simon and Schuster, 1987, is a fair, well written book. Lewin is a biochemist and a believer in evolution. The title is a quote by British anthropologist, John Napier. Napier, Louis Leakey and Phillip Tobias named, *Homo habilis*, a new species, in the mid 1960's. Lewin presents the conflicts between paleoanthropologists. This "science" arose with Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species* in 1859. Placing science in quotes is based on this quote from page 289: "It is certainly true that in the spectrum of the sciences, from ('hard') physics to ('soft') biology, human evolutionary studies are usually regarded as being "soft." Space does not permit a review of the book. It is recommended.

Paleontologists Mary and Louis Leakey are Richard Leakey's parents. The book concerns Richard Leakey and Donald Johanson's debate about the ancestry of humans. Evolution is a given. Johanson discovered a rather complete skeleton which he dubbed Lucy at the Hadar in Ethiopia. In 1978 he and his colleagues classified Lucy *Australopithecus afarensis* and placed it as the ancestor of *humans Homo sapiens*. Mrs. Leakey objected on page 282: "'You've got to have *Homo* coming from somewhere, but I don't see why it should come from the southern apes.' [*Australopithecus*]" She continued, "I'm no anatomist. I've just got a **hunch**." [EMP. RLL] Her negative 'hunch' was because *Homo habilis* of Leakey fame was demoted in the evolutionary scheme.

Personalities, politics and philosophies have, and do, play an important role among those who search for man's origins. This quote on pages 40-41 by Sir Author Keith, a British paleoanthropologist of the 1920s and 30s is enlightening, to the view expressed above. Keith speaks of what he calls an article of "Darwinian faith" saying that, "Nature is jealous of her species building. **Progress-or what is the same thing, Evolution**-[EMP. RLL]is her religion,; the production of new species is her form of worship." In my collegiate days that evolution meant progress was oft quoted. Early evolutionists considered the white race a product of that progress. Hitler used this superior species doctrine to underpin National Socialism. Western cultures which produce most paleontologists and paleoanthropologists abhor racism. Gone is racial evolution and that evolution moves toward nobility expressed by early writers. Evolution is driven by random chance. Chance does not admit of goals or nobility.

I might observe at this point that the scriptures never encouraged racism, opposing opinions notwithstanding. Jehovah instructed the Hebrews of Abraham's lineage, in Leviticus 19:34-35, to treat strangers well. The perfect law of liberty, in Galatians 3:26-29, states that race and social standing are of no consequence among those who obey the gospel in baptism. That which God spoke into being remains so. David sings of the product of God's creation in Psalm 19:1-3; 33:3-10. God's creation stands as it has been since the flood as stated in 2 Peter 3:1-7.

The atheistic evolutionist scoffs at the six day Genesis "myth." Eons of time postulated by evolution theorists are accepted even by some Christians. Popular Bible programs debunking organic evolution find room for the evolutionist's eons of time. The six days of creation are not an issue to some brethren. This is alarming. A crack in the dike of truth is opened. Fluidity concerning the creation days is a step toward accepting the theistic evolutionist's view that, broadly put: "God started the creation but left it to time and natural law to complete, or continue." Fossils dated to the time of the dinosaurs would not be considered by evolutionists as a near ancestor of man. This would violate an article of their faith that humans and dinosaurs were not contemporaries. A group of scientists who believe in the Creator have found considerable contrary evidence along and in the Paluxey River near Glenrose, Texas. The reader is referred to web site: <http://www.bible.ca>. The material on this site is not given a second glance by either evolutionist or religionists (including some brethren) who hanker for an ancient earth. If Bible days are questionable, what may not be questioned? Eons of time eliminate Eloheim the Creator.

Reading scientific literature reveals the faith and folly of infidelity. Bible readers expect to be ridiculed. An old song carols, "-our faith is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness." The Bible, not the "Book of Nature," will be opened at the judgement. Those faithful to The Book will be saved. See Romans 10:17. Ron Lloyd 122 Emerald Dr. Clute, TX 77531 409-265-2933 rlloyd@brazosport.cc.tx.us

Issues Among Brethren MARKETING RELIGION

Competition among differing religious groups has grown so intense that new schemes to draw the crowds and keep them are being devised constantly. George Barna has written a book entitled, "Marketing the Church." In it he says, "The goal of marketing is to make both the producer and the consumer satisfied, so anything which tends to leave the 'consumer' unsatisfied must be jettisoned." This is the concept that drives most churches today, even some known as "churches of Christ." Churches bent on having large numbers and "serving the whole man and his felt needs" work with great fervor to maintain programs of worship and activity that will keep the members satisfied. Following the example of the supermarkets they advertise their weekly "specials."

One church, the Magnolia church of Christ, in Florence, Ala., is currently conducting a "Friends and Neighbors" session during which denominational preachers, politicians, educators, etc. are invited to speak. A local Baptist church advertised on the sign in front of their building that a singing group would entertain at one of their services. Churches have their "family centers," bingo parties, gymnasiums, "fellowship halls," with coffee and doughnuts and on and on and on it goes. When members grow tired of these things, they will be jettisoned and new attractions will be offered.

How sad that churches are spoken of as being "user friendly." In the church man is to bring glory and honor to God, not to self, Eph.3:21. Jesus taught, "God is a spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth," Jn.4:24. God must be the object of our worship. He should be the One we strive to please, as we worship, not self. Paul rightly said, "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ," Gal.1:10.

When a church begins to "market" religion to satisfy the likes and dislikes of men, of necessity, it must sacrifice many of the fundamentals of "the faith which was once delivered to the saints," Jude 3. Positive preaching on righteousness, temperance and the judgment to come causes many to feel uncomfortable and dissatisfied. The gospel must be watered down so as not to offend. The seed of the kingdom, which is the word of God, Lk.8:11, must be sugar-coated lest some be left with a bitter taste in their mouths. It is of no concern to many that Paul instructed Timothy, "Preach the word; reprove rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine," 2 Tim.4:2. Churches of today count among their "faithful" lesbians, homosexuals, adulterers and others simply because they are afraid they will lose members and money if they preach Bible truth on these matters.

Churches have found they can increase the attendance at their services by means of various "marketing" ideas. One that has proven successful for some churches is to invite popular personalities as speakers. These individuals speak on social and political subjects. Christ and the gospel which is God's power to save are ignored. Hearing solutions to social and political problems satisfies some more than hearing about the problem of sin and how to be saved. They much prefer to be entertained with loud-playing bands and special singing groups than to "speak to themselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to God," Eph.5:19. Their thrills, good feelings and satisfaction come from swaying and praying with hands held high in the air. They never wonder whether or not God is pleased with their worship. They have been convinced that this is the thing to do, it makes them feel good, they are satisfied and that is the end of the matter. What they need to understand is that nowhere in the New Testament has God authorized such things to be engaged in as acts of worship to Him. Col.3:17 still teaches, "Whatsoever ye do in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." That simply means we must have God's permission to do and teach the things which we practice and teach in religion. May God help us to "buy the truth, and sell it not," Prov.23:23.

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the latter with *both* the preceding verbs. It enforces the entire exhortation, not one part of it to the exclusion of the other, as Hackett says.” (Warren/Ballard Debate pp 163, 164).

3. “Henry J. Cadbury, member of the Revised Standard Version Committee,...has this to say,...’The grammar of the sentence in Acts 2:38 is perfectly regular and better Greek than if the author had kept the second person plural ‘baptize’ after using the singular ‘each.’ I have no doubt that another author would have written ‘Do ye repent,’ and ‘be ye baptized,’ each of you. But this writer seems to have preferred the less loose construction. I think that there would be no essential difference in meaning.’ Whether you said ‘Do ye repent, and be ye baptized each of you,’ or as it stands exactly, there would be no essential difference in meaning.” (Warren/Ballard Debate, p.164).

The meaning of “For”

According to Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary, “for” has a number of meanings, two of which are (1) because of and (2) purpose. Note these examples: (1) He went to jail for (because of) murder and (2) he went to the store for (in order to get) a loaf of bread. However, the word *eis* (*eis*) which is translated “for” (KJV) or “unto” (ASV) in Acts 2:38 never looks backward, only forward, which gives it the concept of “purpose” in Acts 2:38.

Consider carefully the definition given *eis* by recognized authorities: (1) Arndt And Gingrich, “f. to denote purpose *in order to*, *to*: ...*for forgiveness of sins, so that sins might be forgiven* Mt. 26:28; cf. Mk. 1:4; Lk. 3:3; Ac 2:38...,” (2) *eis* with verbs of motion, “But the usual idiom with *eis* was undoubtedly with verbs of motion when the motion and the accusative case combined with *eis* (‘in’) to give the resultant meaning of ‘into,’ ‘unto,’ ‘among,’ ‘to,’ ‘towards’ or ‘on,’ ‘upon,’ according to the context. This is so common as to call for little illustration.” (Grammar, A.T. Robertson, p. 593), (3) Thayer, “...to obtain the forgiveness of sins, Acts 2:38...” (Lexicon, p. 94).

What about the scholars who indicate that *eis* may mean “because of”? “5. *Aim or Purpose.*” “...this is the idea in Mt. 26:28, ...*eis* *aphesin* *amartion*. But it by no means follows that the same idea is expressed by *eis* *aphesin* in MK. 1:4 and Ac. 2:38 (Cf. Mt. 10:41), though that may in the abstract be true. It remains a matter for the interpreter to decide.” (Grammar, A.T. Robertson, p. 595). (2) Of Mt. 12:41, where the Ninevites “...repented at the preaching of Jonas...,” Mr. Robertson says, “...it is absurd to take *eis* as ‘into’ or ‘unto’ or even ‘to...’” (Grammar, p. 593). (3) Again, Mr. Robertson says of *eis*, “...that the preposition does not of itself mean ‘into’ even with verbs of motion. That is indeed one of the resultant meanings among many others.” (Grammar, p. 593). (4) Mr. J. R. Mantey’s statement quoted in the Dana and Mantey Grammar where he said, “The sentence *μετανοησεν εις το κερυγμα ιον* (repented at the preaching of Jonah. Also, note that *μετανοησεν*, third person singular, should be *μετανοησαν*, third person plural, GM) in Mt. 12:41 and Lk. 12:32 (should be Lk. 11:32, GM) is forceful evidence for a causal use of this preposition. What led to their repentance? Of course, it was Jonah’s preaching.” (P. 104). What is overlooked is the preceding paragraph where Mr. Mantey said, “When one considers in Ac. 2:38 repentance as self-renunciation and baptism as a public expression of self-surrender and self-dedication to Christ, which significance it certainly had in the first century, the expression *εις απησιν τον αμαρτιον υμων* (unto the remission of your sins, GM) may mean *for the purpose of the remission of sins*. But if one stresses baptism, without its early Christian import, as a ceremonial means of salvation, he does violence to Christianity as a whole, for one of its striking distinctions from Judaism and Paganism is that it is a religion of salvation by faith while all others teach salvation by works.”

Question: Did the Ninevites repent “because of” the preaching of Jonah? Yes! Is that what Mt. 12:41 and Luke 11:32 teach? NO! Indeed, Jonah’s going to Nineveh and preaching helped bring about the repentance of the Ninevites. But, Matthew 12:41 and Luke 11:32 do not say that. They say that the Ninevites repented *eis* (unto or into) the benefits of Jonah’s preaching or in order to comply with Jonah’s preaching. Their repentance looked FORWARD to something NOT BACKWARD.

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For As Used In Acts 2:38 (Continued from page 2)

What does “for” (eis) mean in Acts 2:38? It means “unto” or “in order to,” NOT “because of.” One last thought along this line and that is a reminder of what J. W. Wilmarth said as quoted above, “...those who contend for the interpretation ‘on account of remission’ will hardly be willing to admit that Peter said ‘Repent’ as well as ‘be baptized on account of remission of sins.’ Whatever baptism is “for,” repentance is “for.” We simply cannot separate them. Therefore, “for” in Acts 2:38 means “unto,” or “in order to.”

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(First written for a Web Page produced by Don Martin)

Our Guest Writers: Brethren Steve Walker, Ron Lloyd, Randall Elrod, Norman Fultz, and Wendell Watts have done excellent work in writing articles for StraitWay in 1999. I have appreciated the opportunity to have fellowship with them in this work. From comments I have heard and read, it is evident that the readers also appreciate their work. Thank you brethren.

In 2000, look for articles by other men who will be working with me. --Editor
