

Study on the Greek word "eis"

by Donald A. Nash

Don't Slip on the eis

On the Day of Pentecost, after Peter's great gospel message on salvation through the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, the people cried out, "What shall we do?" (to be saved is understood). Peter replied plainly, without equivocation, "Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Yet faith-only preachers deny baptism is necessary, saying it is only a sign you are saved and for church membership.

Their favorite argument is that the preposition "for" (eis- pronounced like "ice") can mean "because" and say this indicates, "be baptized because your sins have been forgiven." Since, "baptized" is joined with "repent" by "and" this would mean "repentance" also was after salvation, yet the need for repentance is proclaimed many places in the New Testament (Acts 3:19; 17:30; Romans 2:4) - Jesus Himself said, "Except you repent, you shall likewise perish" (Luke 13:3).

Eis occurs 1,773 times in the New Testament and never means "because." It is used by Jesus in Matthew 26:28, "For this is my blood, which is shed for many for (eis) the remission of sins" He certainly didn't mean sins were remitted before His blood was shed.

Dr. Henry B. Dewing, president of Athens College, Athens, Greece, said, "I should translate, 'Let everyone of you be baptized for the (attainment of) forgiveness of sins. '...The meaning 'because of' is .. utterly out of the question.'" Baptist scholar Edgar Goodspeed, who translated a popular version of the New Testament admitted, "It (eis) never means "because of." He used "in order to." However, he said he disagreed with Peter's theology in that regard, thus rejecting the infallible inspiration of the Scriptures.

One radio preacher in an attempt to prove this fallacy said, "Suppose I said to you, 'Thank you for the gift.' I would mean 'because of the gift,' not to get

it." There is an example of his illustration in the New Testament. 2 Corinthians 9:15 reads, "Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift." If eis is used here as "for" he has proven his point. However, it is not eis but epi, which can be rendered "because of." Not only does this not prove his point but disproves that eis can mean "because" in Acts 2:38, as Peter would have used epi if that was his point there.

The popular Baptist preacher Charles Swindoll evidently concedes that eis means "for" but has another deceptive device to wrest this Scripture. In a quarterly publication he wrote that "repent" is plural but be baptized is singular so the verse should read. "Repent for the forgiveness of your sins; be baptized and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." No version ever translates it thus and this is not the significance of the plural and singular. In fact the singular of "be baptized" enforces the need. Suppose I said to a class, "You (pl) study and each of you (sing) pass the test and you (pl) will be promoted." I am not minimizing passing the test but emphasizing it.

Then Swindoll makes another ridiculous claim that vs. 41 states that those who repented were baptized following their conversion, not preceding it. Any child could see this is not true. It simply says that the ones who accepted Peter's statement obeyed it by being baptized. To add to the confusion, he cites nine scriptures which he claims state that "one is saved by faith alone" in James 2:17, which says such faith is invalid. What about Hebrews 5:9 that says Christ saves those who "obey Him"?

One writer asked why quarrel over this minute point about the function of baptism. A teenage girl in a Christian Church youth group rejected baptism, saying she was saved by just trusting in Jesus. She showed her minister Swindoll's article and indicated she was trusting him rather than the Word of God.

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