

## I. Know the Plan - 2 Peter 3:16-18, Acts 2:38 - Syntax

Beginning on this day of Pentecost, the birthday of the Church Age, every person who believes in Jesus Christ is immediately indwelt and filled with the Holy Spirit.

He in turn, instantly imputes to the believer a host of divine operating assets including the Grace Apparatus for Perception.

This grants the believer capacity to acquire the thinking of God and the potential to execute the Christian way of life.

Now that we see precisely how this sentence reads, there is yet one other thing to note and that is its syntax. First a corrected translation.

**Acts 2:38 (Corrected Translation Version) - And Peter said to them, “All of you change your mind [respond positively to the gnosis you have acquired regarding Jesus], and let each one of you be baptized [immersion into water] because your sins have been forgiven [through faith in Jesus], and all of you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit [indwelling, filling, and divine operating assets].”**

This is the word order as it appears in the original Greek text.

If you were a Jew of the first century who spoke fluent Koine Greek, it would have made perfect sense to you.

It is God’s desire, that we understand His Scriptures to the same degree as the one who either communicated the message or the one who heard the message.

In order to accomplish that we go through a system of exegesis—a grammatical analysis of the passage.

Exegesis also takes into consideration the syntax of a passage and we must note that here.

Syntax is defined as follows in **H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey's, A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament, [Toronto: The Macmillan Company]; pp. 59-61:**

*The idea that syntax is a formulation of rules for correct speech is an erroneous notion. Syntax is the process of analyzing the modes of expression presented by a language. It does not govern language; it deals with the facts of language as they are found. Syntax deals essentially with the forms which thought may take in the process of expression.*

Remember that Peter is delivering a public speech. He is seeking to communicate to the Jewish mind in the language of Koine Greek the correct process they should follow for salvation.

His first mandate to them is that all of them change their minds about Jesus.

Then he uses the Greek conjunction *kai*, translated “and,” followed by a change of person and tense; then a second use of *kai*, and a return to the original person and tense.

The first verb is the second person plural of *metanoeo*, “All of you change your minds.”

Then the conjunction *kai*, “and,” followed by the third person singular of the verb, *baptize*, “. . . and let each one of you be baptized.”

Then he uses a second *kai*, followed by the second person plural of the verb, *lambano*, “. . . and all of you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

When the conjunction *kai* is followed by a change in person and tense, it indicates a syntactical break, understood by the audience to serve as parentheses, or as dashes, setting the information apart from the rest of the sentence.

Again, syntax is a technique which observes the grammatical rules of a particular language, it does not establish those rules.

Those fluent in Koine Greek clearly understood this statement by Peter.

But English syntax and word order is quite different and thus when translated word for word from the Greek, it presents confusion to the mind of the English-speaking person.

Therefore, in order to clear up the confusion, I am going to offer three corrected translations which recognize the original content but also takes into consideration the difference in Greek and English syntax.

**Acts 2:38 (Corrected Translation Version)** - And Peter said to them, “All of you change your mind [**respond positively to the gnosis you have acquired regarding Jesus**], > open parenthesis > (and let each one of you be baptized [**immersion into water**] because your sins have been forgiven [**through faith in Jesus**],) < close parenthesis < and all of you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit [**indwelling, filling, and divine operating assets**].”

**Acts 2:38 (Corrected Translation Version)** - And Peter said to them, “All of you change your mind [**respond positively to the gnosis you have acquired regarding Jesus**] > open dashes > -and let each one of you be baptized [**immersion into water**] because your sins have been forgiven [**through faith in Jesus**]- < close dashes < and all of you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit [**indwelling, filling, and divine operating assets**].”

**Acts 2:38 (Corrected Translation Version)** - And Peter said to them, “All of you change your mind [**respond positively to the gnosis you have acquired regarding Jesus**] and all of you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit [**indwelling, filling, and divine operating assets**], > then let each one of you be baptized [**immersion into water**] because your sins have been forgiven [**through faith in Jesus**].” <

Before moving on I would like to conclude our examination of this verse by reading Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer’s comments on the subject of repentance.

**Chafer, Lewis Sperry. “Soteriology.” Vol.3 of Systematic Theology. 8 vols. Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1947, pp. 372-378 passim.**

**Acts 2:39** - For the promise [**Gospel**] is for you and your children [**Jews**], and for all who are far off [**Gentiles**], as many as the Lord our God shall call [**academic understanding at Gospel hearing/unlimited atonement**] to Himself.

**Acts 2:40** - And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, “Be delivered from this perverse generation [**those who were complicit in the crucifixion of Jesus**]!” [**Acts 2:23 and Acts 2:36**]

**Acts 2:41** - So then those who had received his word [**positive volition at Gospel hearing**] were baptized; and there were added that day about three thousand souls.