

# A MINISTRY FOR HUNGRY SAINTS

UNDER THE EXALTED CHRIST, THE GOSPEL BEGINS TO SPREAD

# THE ACTS

† THE BOOK OF ACTS

## OF THE APOSTLES

*An overview of the Book of Acts, by Given O. Blakely*

### ACTS 5:31-32

*"Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him."*

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

### Lesson #6

### COMMENTARY ON: 2:5-13

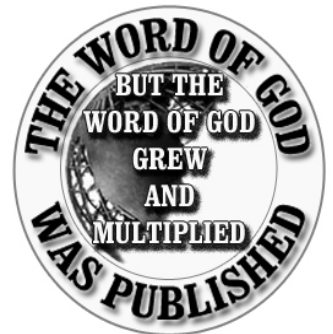
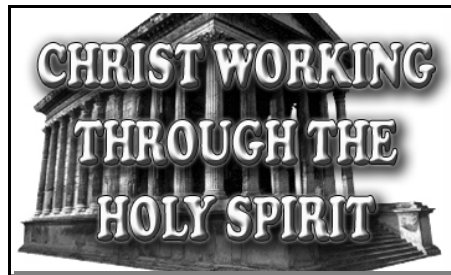
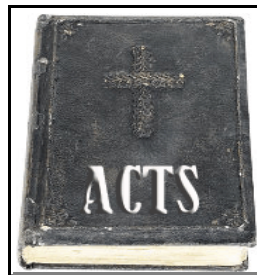
#### THE NEWS OF THE EVENTS AND THE ACTION OF THE PEOPLE

As one might expect, the news of what was happening among the disciples travels quickly – just as surely as the news of Jesus spread rapidly when He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed of the devil. Because what was happening was induced by heavenly influences working upon pure hearts and minds, the results will blend with the means that produce them. The inspired occurrences will draw the attention of "devout men" who have come to Jerusalem from "every nation under heaven." A message is being declared that is clearly understood, yet its implications will not be clear to the people. The ones who are speaking do not appear qualified to speak as they do. Because of their apparent lack of inhibition, some even imagine they are under the influence of "new wine." What a remarkable day is under way!

### ACTS 17:26-27

*"And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us."*

" . . . and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8)



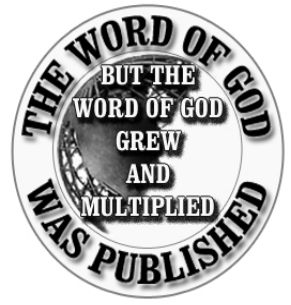
Since May, 1993, a ministry instituted for the encouragement of believers in Christ





## The Book of Acts

### Lesson Number 6



**A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO BUILDING THE FAITH AND ENHANCING THE HOPE OF THOSE WHO ARE WORKING OUT THEIR OWN SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.**

**TRANSLATION LEGEND:** **AMPLIFIED** or **AMP** = Amplified Bible, (1965), **ASV**= American Standard Version (1901), **BBE**=Bible in Basic English (1949), **DRA**= Douay-Rheims (1899), **ESV**= English Stand Version (2001), **IE** = International English, **ISV** = International Standard Version (1967), **JPS** = Jewish Publicatrion Society (1917), **KJV**= King James Version (1611), **LIVING** = Living Bible (1971), **MONTGOMERY** = Montgomery's New Testament (2001), **MRD** = Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), **NAB**= New American Bible (2002), **NASB**= New American Standard Bible (1977), **NAU**= New American Standard Bible (1995), **NIB**= New International Bible, **NIV**= New International Version (1984), **NJB**= New Jerusalem Bible (1985), **NKJV**= New King James Version (1979), **NLT**= New Living Translation (1996), **NRSV**= New Revised Standard Version (1989), **PHILLIPS** = J B Phillips New Testament (1962), **PNT** = BISHOP'S New Testament (1595), **RSV**= Revised Standard Version (1952), **TNK**= JPS Tanakh (1985), **Webster**= The Webster Bible (1833), **WEYMOUTH**= Weymouth's New Testament (1903), **WILLIAMS** = William's New Testament (1937), **TNK** = JPS Tanakh (1985), **TYNDALE**= Tyndale's Bible (1526), **WYCLIFFE**= Wycliffe New Testament (1382), **YLT**= Young's Literal Translation (1862).

**LEXICON LEGEND:** **FRIEBERG**= Friberg Lexicon, **UBS**= UBS Lexicon, **LOUW-NIDA**= Louw-Nida Lexicon, **LIDDELL SCOTT**= Liddell Scott Lexicon, **THAYER**= Thayer's Greek Lexicon

**THE INSPIRED RECORD OF HOW THE EXALTED CHRIST, BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, WORKED THROUGH HIS APOSTLES AND HOLY MEN TO SPREAD THE WORD OF THE GOSPEL THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE WORLD.**

----- Lexicon and Bible Translation Codes with Identification -----

**DISCLAIMER:** The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

# THE NEWS OF THE EVENTS, AND THE REACTION OF THE PEOPLE

“ 2:5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. <sup>6</sup> Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. <sup>7</sup> And they were all amazed and marveled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? <sup>8</sup> And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? <sup>9</sup> Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, <sup>10</sup> Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, <sup>11</sup> Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. <sup>12</sup> And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? <sup>13</sup> Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.” (Acts 2:5-13)

## INTRODUCTION

Compared to the occasion – the Feast of Pentecost – and the multitude who were in the city of Jerusalem, the attention of the Spirit is focused on a relatively small number of people. One

Hundred and Twenty individuals are involved, and **their activities appear to be wholly unrelated to the traditional day of Pentecost.** This was a God-ordained day, and had been in place for fifteen hundred

years. It was intended to be a public gathering, festive in nature, with the involvement of all of the people – including women, children, servants, handmaidens, strangers, widows, and

*The news of the unusual events taking place among the disciples spreads rapidly, producing responses– by Given O. Blakely*

## CONTENTS

- THE POPULOUS (2:5)
- THE REPORT GOES OUT (2:6a)
- THE MULTITUDE COME TOGETHER (2:6b)
- THE RESPONSE OF THE MULTITUDE (2:7a)
- THE TONGUES – THE MIRACLE OF SPEECH (2:7b-8)
- THE DIVERSITY OF THE CROWD (2:9-11a).
- WHAT THEY WERE HEARING (2:11b)
- CONSTERNATION! (2:12-13)
- CONCLUSION

orphans (Deut 16:10-11). Yet, on this day something was taking place that is superior to the common feast of Pentecost. **There was a transition taking place from the old to the new, from the shadow to the substance, and from the type to the antetype.** This was in fact, the day that was in the mind of the Lord when He ordained the feast of Pentecost, or, as it was commonly called, “*the feast of weeks*” (Ex 34:22; Deut 16:10,16; 2 Chron 8:13). Because it is important that we be familiar with the principle of types and shadows, a few words concerning them are appropriate in our preparation for a review of the text before us.

### TYPES AND SHADOWS

The Kingdom of God is driven by purpose – an “*eternal purpose.*” It is **progressive in its revelation, but not in its conception.** An “*eternal purpose*” is neither conceived nor carried out according to human responses. Nor, indeed, is it adjusted here and there because of unexpected circumstances.

Before the world was made, the purpose of God was fully conceived, and fixed determinations made. This purpose is called God’s “*eternal purpose*” (Eph 3:11). That is, it is an expression of His very nature. It is a purpose that was conceived independently of the human condition. It is not a response to the dilemma of humanity. This is why it is said to have been “*purposed in Himself*” (Eph 1:9). So far as its execution in the

world is concerned, it was “*purposed in Christ Jesus*” (Eph 3:11b).

This purpose is included in the works of God, which were “*finished from the foundation of the world*” (Heb 4:3). As a vicarious sacrifice that would enable God to be “*just*” in the justification of men (Rom 3:26), Jesus is referred to as “*the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*” (Rev 13:8). In regards to His death, He is also referred to as “*a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world.*” (1 Pet 1:19-20). Concerning the justified ones themselves, they are said to have been “*chosen*” in Christ “*before the foundation of the world*” (Eph 1:4).

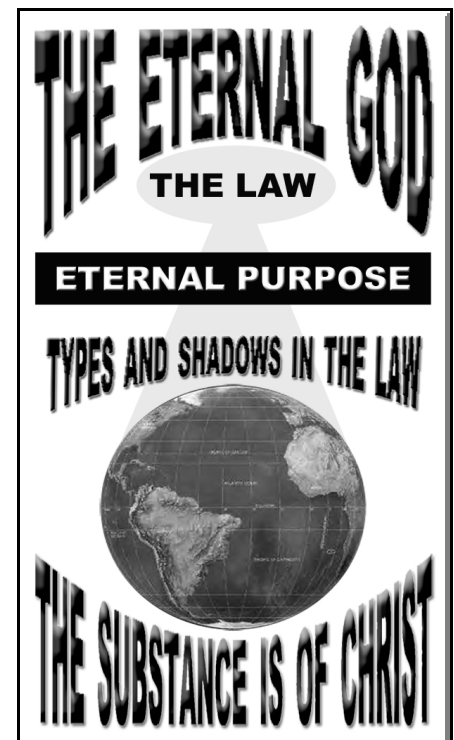
If we consider the wisdom of God as made known in His great salvation, we must speak of “*the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory*” (1 Cor 2:7). When referring to salvation itself, the Spirit informs us that God has “*saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began*” (2 Tim 1:9). If we speak of the ultimate aim of salvation – eternal life – we speak in this manner: “*In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began*” (Titus 1:2). If we consider the inheritance that has been prepared for the redeemed ones, we refer to “*the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world*” (Matt 25:34).

Admittedly, this kind of language is exceedingly difficult for some to receive. They associate it with a form of fate that depersonalizes every aspect of salvation. Others see it as guaranteeing that some will be saved, even though their conduct contradicts the Divine nature. God’s choice, in such a case, is seen as overriding circumstances that are at variance with His own nature. God is, therefore, perceived as tolerating conduct that He elsewhere condemns, because of His choice that makes human conduct irrelevant. **Such a God is a contradiction, conducting his affairs contrary to His revelation of own nature.** Still others brush this whole matter aside by saying it is nothing more than “*Calvinism.*”

These responses, and others that are related to them, are nothing more than proof that such people cannot handle “*accurately the word of truth*”<sup>NASB</sup> (2 Tim 2:15). Their minds have not been molded by truth, but by the traditions of men. Thus they have mutilated the Word of God like Jehudi did the writings of Jeremiah (Jer 36:23). Like some of the Jewish teachers Paul confronted, they are “*Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm*” (1 Tim 1:7).

If you remove the “*before the foundation of the world*” perspective, you **make Scripture fundamentally unintelligible.** For, if what God has done is not connected with who He and what He purpose before the world was created, you make the Gospel subjective, and open the door for all manner of corruption.

Why is it wrong to neglect Moses and the Prophets, as though they had been erased from Scripture. It is **not** so much because of their history, and the manner in which the Lord worked with and responded to men – although that is of inestimable value. In all of God’s dealings – particularly during the administration of the Law – there were types and shadows that portrayed both



the nature and the effectiveness of the great salvation He would accomplish in Christ Jesus. There were not only specific prophecies that declared *“the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow”* (1 Pet 1:11). Couched within the ceremonial law, there were reflections of the High Priesthood of Jesus (Lev 21:10; 7:26; 8:1), being sanctified by blood (Ex 24:8; Heb 13:12), and making continual intercession for the people (Ex 18:19; Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25). Those ceremonies introduced men to a substitutionary sacrifice (Lev 9:7; 10:17; 1 Cor 5:7), a living sacrifice (Lev 14:6-7; 16:20-21; Rom 12:1; Rev 1:18), partaking of the sacrifice (Ex 29:32; Heb 3:14; 13:10), and atonement (Ex 29:36; Rom 5:11).

Before *“the worlds”* (Heb 1:2; 11:3) were created, God’s *“eternal purpose”* was cast in stone. In fact, it was His reason for making the world, which would be a stage on which the drama of that purpose would be worked out. None of God’s workings among men is independent of that purpose. When, for example, He gave the Law and its

throughout remaining history.

It is important that this day be seen from a two-fold point of view. **First, it was the fulfillment of something that was promised by the prophets, and the prophets did not speak of a single day, but of “the day of salvation.”** Nor, indeed, did they speak of a blessing that would be experienced by a select group within the company of the redeemed. While there are differing ministries within the body of Christ, they all partake of the benefits that were foretold by the prophets. Ponder what was said of the prophet’s message.

⇨ **THE GOSPEL OF GOD.** *“Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures)”* (Rom 1:1-2).

⇨ **THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD.** *“But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the*

⇨ **THE PIVOTAL CHRIST.** *“And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone”* (Eph 2:20).

⇨ **SALVATION.** *“Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow”* (1 Pet 1:11).

⇨ **A FALLING AWAY.** *“That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Savior: Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts”* (2 Pet 3:2-3).

⇨ **THE COMPLETION OF THE MYSTERY OF GOD.** *“But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as He hath declared to his servants the prophets”* (Rev 10:7).

It is essential that we realize the nature of these prophecies as well as their details. **None of them were confined to a particular period or region.** The healing waters that went throughout the world were of the same substance as the waters that initially flowed out from right side of the altar (Ezek 47:1-9). The living waters that flowed out from Jerusalem did not assume a different nature and manner as they spread into distant regions (Zech 14:8).

**For too long, men without spiritual understanding have been shaping the thinking of the Christian community.** They have taught men of a Kingdom that has differing, and even competing qualities. The blessings of salvation have been divided into those pertaining to the first century, and those pertaining to following centuries. The high sounding logic that is presented to support these suppositions may appear flawless, but it is rotten to the core. If the

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attending ceremonies, it was filtered through this purpose. They acquainted men with the things that were required for their redemption, and with the Savior who would carry them out.

**WHY SAY THESE THINGS?**

It is necessary to say these things because of the view some have chosen to take of the day of Pentecost. Such treat it as though it had only an ancient purpose, and stands by itself upon the terrain of theology. Others perceive it as something that is repeated over and over

*prophets”* (Rom 3:21).

⇨ **THE MYSTERY OF REDEMPTION.** *“Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith”* (Rom 16:25-26).

prophets foretold of the days of salvation, as is solidly affirmed (Acts 3:24), **then their words will support all sound theology.** However, if they do not, the theology is false, and is not to be given the luxury of a moment of consideration. If a person's view of "*the day of salvation*" does not comport with what the prophets said was coming, we do not need to

disprove the notion. **The very fact that is not supported by what God said was coming, confirms it belongs in the dung heap, together with all other imaginations.**

I have said these things because the chronicling of the events of the day of Pentecost will confirm that **they were in**

**strict accord with the words of the prophets.** In fact, Peter will appeal to the message of the prophets to confirm the truth of the Gospel he declares (Acts 2:16-21,25-28, 30-31,34-35). He will affirm that what the people saw and heard was precisely according to the prophets.

## THE POPULOUS

***“2:5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.”***

Whatever men may think about the environment in which Jesus chose to minister, the events of this day will perfectly harmonize with the nature of the Savior's earthly ministry. **His work did not contradict the nature of the Kingdom of which He preached.** Some thoughtlessly say Jesus chose to identify with harlots and base people. I do not know who started that bit of nonsense, but it surely reveals a miserable level of spiritual understanding, and possibly the presence of a fundamentally dishonest heart. When Jesus chose the people He wanted to be with Him, He did not choose harlots or people who were in any way degenerate. In times when He wanted only a few select people to be with Him, He did not choose harlots and publicans. When these people were found with Jesus, they had come to Him, not He to them (Matt 9:10; Mk 2:15; Lk 5:29; 15:1). However, they did not come as publicans and harlots, but as those who were in quest of the Christ. This is precisely why Jesus said to His critics, "*Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you*" (Matt 21:31). **They were not Jesus' preferred company. It was He who became their preferred company!**

Daily He taught in the Temple, not the marketplace (Matt 26:55; Lk 19:47; 21:37). When he went throughout the cities, He is not said to have taught in the various places where the common multitudes gathered, but in the synagogues (Matt 4:23; 9:35; ; Mk 1:39; Lk 4:15,44; 13:10). Wherever people

listened to Him, Jesus remained. Wherever the people ignored Him, contradicted what He said, or criticized Him, He left (Matt 13:53; 16:4; 21:17; Mk 6:46; 8:13; John 6:15).

This is not even to mention the manner in which God involved Himself with humanity prior to Christ. He was selective about the ones to whom He spoke (Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, etc). He cultured a nation with whom He worked exclusively, "*to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the*

that which is lost. **It does mean that the interest of the people in the things of God is what keeps the godly coming to them.**

Now, this Divine manner will be confirmed again by **the location** in which this outpouring was taking place, and **the people** who would gather to observe what was happening.

### AT JERUSALEM

*"And there were dwelling at Jerusalem . . ."* Other versions read, "*living in Jerusalem,*" <sup>NASB</sup> "*staying in Jerusalem,*" <sup>NIV</sup> "*resident in Jerusalem,*" <sup>MRD</sup> and "*in Jerusalem that day.*" <sup>LIVING</sup>

**The inauguration of the New Covenant did not take place in Athens, Rome, or Alexandria. It did not even take place in Bethlehem or Nazareth, both of which were blessed by the presence of the Lord. God had chosen a particular city, placing His name there, so that it was identified with Him.**

*promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen*" (Rom 9:4-5). This very manner contradicts the philosophy of the modern church, which has chosen to neglect those who hunger and thirst for righteousness – a manner that is blatantly against everything we know about the Lord. Although it should not be necessary to say it, this does not suggest that it is ever proper to withhold the truth from the needy, or to seek and save

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all tribes of Israel, will I put My name for ever" (2 Kgs 21:7). He referred to Jerusalem as the city "which I have chosen" (1 Kgs 11:13). It is described as "Jerusalem, the city which the LORD did choose out of all the tribes of Israel, to put His name there" (1 Kgs 14:21).

Jeremiah prophesied of Jerusalem, "At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the LORD; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart" (Jer 3:17). Again, Jeremiah said of Jerusalem, "In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness" (Jer 33:16). Joel said of this city, "for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call" (Joel 2:32).

Now we will see the reason for

Law, they had been drawn there by obligation. According to the Spirit, they had been drawn there by God Himself, who is the One who draws men to Christ. As it is written, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:44). According to Jeremiah, He was drawing them with "lovingkindness" (Jer 31:3). According to Hosea, they were being drawn with "the cords of a man" (Hos 11:4).

Isaiah said of "the mountain of the Lord's house," "and all nations shall flow into it" (Isa 2:2). Here is the initial, or preliminary, fulfillment of that promise. It is a pledge of what will yet happen, just as surely as the day of Pentecost was the celebration of the firstfruits of a greater harvest to come.

#### DEVOUT MEN

"... Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven." Other versions read, "God fearing Jews from every nation,"<sup>NIV</sup> "Jews, God-fearing men

of pledge to all who hunger and thirst for righteousness, that they will be "filled" (Matt 5:6).

I do not question that all types of people were in Jerusalem at this time – serious and frivolous, holy and profane, zealous and casual, thankful and unthankful. Israel came out of Egypt with a "mixed multitude" (Ex 12:38; Num 11:4), and it is sure that one came to this feast. However, when the Spirit wrote up the record of these events, He mentioned only "devout men," which made their way to Jerusalem "from every nation under heaven."

And what are "devout men?" The word "devout" comes from a word that means, "taking hold well, carefully and surely; reverencing God, pious, religious,"<sup>THAYER</sup> "cautious, devout, pious, as a characteristic of one who carefully observes the law,"<sup>FRIBERG</sup> "pertaining to reverent toward God,"<sup>LOUW-NIDA</sup> and "undertaking prudently, discreet, cautious, circumspect,"<sup>LIDDELL-SCOTT</sup>

These were people characterized by the utmost seriousness about the Lord. They took His word seriously, being fully aware of what was required of them. They had a mind that was prone to ponder upon, and take hold of, the things of God.

Simeon, who was privileged to see the Lord's Christ before many others, was noted for being "just and devout" (Lk 2:25). When Stephen was stoned to death, "devout men," knowing the danger of the circumstances, came forward to bury him (Acts 8:2). Cornelius, who was honored by heaven with a minister who declared the Gospel to him, was known as "a devout man" (Acts 10:2). Ananias, who was chosen by God to heal Paul and see to it that he received the Holy Spirit, is also described as "a devout man" (Acts 22:12). A word used in Moses and the prophets that is quite similar is "upright" (1 Sam 29:6; 2 Sam 22:24; 2 Chron 29:34; Job 1:1; Psa 7:10).

Ponder the church multitudes who have little or no perception of the Lord or His requirements. They want to be called "Christians," and be known as members of Christ's church, yet they have no compelling interest in the things of God. They are not "devout." They have Bibles, have access to teachers, and are

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this emphasis on Jerusalem. It was in expectation of "the day of salvation" and the announcement of good news! A Deliverer would be announced in this city who would ultimately "turn away ungodliness from Jacob" (Rom 11:26). This is why God chose this city, blessed it, and placed the sign of His presence there – the Temple, in which the "ark of God the Lord" was placed, whose name was "called on it" (1 Chron 13:6). This city had been cultured for this occasion as no other city.

#### Dwelling At Jerusalem

There were more people in Jerusalem than normal. A whole host of people – several thousand – were there for the celebration of Pentecost, having come from other areas. According to the

from every nation,"<sup>BBE</sup> "Jews, pious men from every nation,"<sup>DARBY</sup> "Jews, men that feared God, of every nation,"<sup>GENEVA</sup> "Godly Jews from many nations,"<sup>NLT</sup> "godly Jews . . . for the religious celebrations, having arrived from many nations,"<sup>LIVING</sup> "devout Jews . . . from every country in the world,"<sup>IE</sup> "devout men from every part of the world,"<sup>WEYMOUTH</sup> "devout Jews from many and distant lands,"<sup>MONTGOMERY</sup> "devout and God-fearing men from every country under heaven,"<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup> and "Jews of deep faith from every nation of the world."<sup>PHILLIPS</sup>

What kind of people will the Lord draw into Jerusalem? In what kind of soil will the initial sowing of word of salvation be done? This will tell us something about the Lord, and be a sort

invited by God to ask for wisdom – and yet they remain ignorant of matters pertaining to life and godliness. **They are not devout.** They know that Jesus told them to remember Him at the Lord’s table, but they do not take it seriously. **They are not devout.** They have been told that the Lord is coming again, and that His reward will be with Him, but they are not prepared. **They are not devout.**

Let us not be naive about this. God will not work for good in the midst of such a people. **He granted no covenantal favors to those in Israel who were not devout, and He has not pledged Himself to act any differently under the New Covenant.** An unholy church is, by the very nature of things, a spiritually ignorant one. A people who remain aloof from God reflect that aloofness in their understanding, their manners, and their preferences. If such people come to Jerusalem in ignorance, unless their apathy is changed to interest, they will leave the same way – in ignorance.

Take the great conversions of Scripture. The multitudes at Pentecost

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(Acts 2:41), Cornelius and his household (Acts 10:36-48), the city of Samaria (Acts 8:5-6), and the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:27-39). Ponder Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:3-18), Lydia (Acts 16:14-15), the Philippian jailor (Acts 16:30-34), Crispus (Acts 18:8), and the barbarians of Melita (Acts 28:9-10). Which of them was not devout? Who among them had no interest in what was being said? Which of them lacked a fervent desire to obtain what the Gospel offered? **What would lead anyone to believe that God would suddenly shower grace and favor upon a person who had no interest in Him?** And, where is there a case of such a thing occurring? If someone cites Saul of Tarsus, it must be

remembered that he was “*zealous for the tradition of*” the Jewish “*fathers*” (Gal 1:14), was living “*in all good conscience*” (Acts 23:1), and “*was zealous toward God*” (Acts 22:3). He was not a political insurrectionist like Barabbas (Mk 15:7).

We cannot make too much of our text – about “*devout men*” being gathered in Jerusalem. **They were men who acted upon what they knew, and therefore were given more.** However deficient they may have been, they had a desire to fulfill the word of the Lord – even when it was rather inconvenient. When “*the love of many*” waxes “*cold*” (Matt 24:12), a most dangerous situation is found.

## THE REPORT GOES OUT

**“6a Now when this was noised abroad . . .”** Other versions read, “*And when this sound occurred,*” NKJV/NASB “*When they heard this sound,*” NIV “*And at this sound,*” NRSV “*And when this sound was heard,*” ASV “*And when this sound came to their ears,*” BBE “*But the rumor of this having spread,*” DARBY “*When they heard this sound,*” NLT “*And when they heard the roaring in the sky above the house,*” LIVING and “*they heard the noise.*” IE

There is a technical differentiation in the words being used. In verse two, there is reference to “*a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind.*” There the Greek word used is ἤχος (ay-khos), which generally means an impersonal roar – like the sea, the wind, etc. In verse six, however, the Greek word used (for “*noised*”) is φωνή (phone-aas) which has the meaning, “*a voice i.e. the sound of uttered words,*” THAYER “*a sound produced through the throat of living creatures . . . voice,*

speech, utterance,” FRIBERG “*normally a distinctive type of sound as opposed to confused noise*” LOUW-NIDA and “*a sound, tone, properly the sound of the voice, mostly of men.*” LIDDELL-SCOTT

There are, it is true, some students of language that say this refers to the “*sound of a rushing mighty wind,*” and that the Greek word used here is also used of impersonal sounds. However, first, this precise Greek word is used twenty-three times in Scripture (Lk 17:15; John 5:25,28; 10:3,16,27; 18:37; Acts 2:6; 9:7; 11:7; 22:7; 24:21; 1Cor 14:11; Heb 3:7,15; 4:7; 2 Pet 1:17; Rev 3:20; 10:7; 11:12; 14:13; 16:12,13). **With the exception of Acts 2:6, all of these texts employ the word “voice,” and refer to the utterance of words, as compared to a loud unintelligible sound.**

Second it is not likely that the “*sound of a rushing mighty wind*” would draw people together. It would rather

move the people to withdraw from such a place. *It is not likely that* “*devout Jews,*” familiar with Moses and the Prophets, would be drawn together by “*a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind,*” – a sound associated with danger and destruction.

Third, the sound is said to have filled “*all the house*” where the disciples were sitting. It is not said to have filled all Jerusalem, or a specific area in Jerusalem other than this particular house.

Fourth, when the multitude came together they confessed their astonishment was not at the sound of wind but at the voice of words.

The words “*noised abroad*” have at least two possible meanings. One is that the speaking of the disciples themselves was heard extensively outside

of the house where they were sitting. A. T. Robertson takes this view: "The meaning seems to be that the excited 'other tongues' of verse 4 were so loud that the noise drew the people together. The house where the 120 were may have been (Hackett) on one of the avenues leading to the Temple." ROBERTSON'S WORD PICTURES

Another meaning, and the one

multitudes, then draw them together by the sound of a wind that is said to have been inside the house where the disciples were sitting. Some argue that if the words of the disciples are meant, a plural verb would have been used here rather than a single one. However, this is easily resolved when we realize that it is the report of the "sounds" that was spread

came to him. Word of him spread rapidly, and the people gathered to hear him preach (Matt 3:5; 14:5; Mk 1:5; Lk 3:7,15).

⇒ **THE MINISTRY OF THE LORD JESUS.** This is also in keeping with the ministry of Jesus, during which the witness of His mighty works were spread throughout the area by reports, thereby drawing the people to Him (Mk 2:1-2; 7:24; John 4:47).

⇒ **THE MINISTRY OF PAUL.** News of the ministry of Paul spread wherever he was (Acts 17:6; 21:28; 23:9; 28:8-9).

When speaking to Festus, Paul reminded him that the thing of which he preached "was not done in a corner" (Acts 26:26). That is, what God did, particularly regarding Christ Jesus, was known by the multitudes. **This was not because everything was actually done before them, but because the report of the doing was spread abroad.** Even when Jesus told those He had healed to not speak about the matter, they did so anyway (Mk 7:36; Lk 5:14-15). This is because the working of the Lord is so unique that men cannot keep silence about it. That is why periods of history in which the Gospel was clearly and powerfully and insightfully preached experienced great awakenings and revivals.

**The report of the working of the Lord has a certain spiritual drawing power to it.** This is not intended to suggest that if men want big crowds they should preach the Gospel in order that their objectives may be reached. That is a corrupt way of thinking. Godly means are intended for godly objectives.

**When God begins to work in a public manner, the word of it will spread. More than being a human trait, this is the manner of the Kingdom.**

that I prefer, is that some did, indeed, hear the disciples speaking in other languages, and began to report the happening, spreading the rumor throughout the city. Some of the translations present this view: "But the rumor of this having spread,"<sup>DARBY</sup> "Now when this was noised,"<sup>GENEVA</sup> "When this was noised about,"<sup>PNT</sup> and "and the rumor of this having come."<sup>YLT</sup>

Some students and translators of Scripture often use the rules of language to determine their view, rather than contextual considerations, and the revealed manner of Divine working. For example, some feel that the antecedent of "this" is "the sound of a rushing mighty wind," of verse two. Even from a linguistic point of view, this is most difficult to support. However, it is also hard to accept that God would pour out a gift calculated to appeal to the

throughout the community, and not the sounds themselves.

**WHAT MAY BE LEARNED FROM THIS?**

When God begins to work in a public manner, the word of it will spread. More than being a human trait, this is the manner of the Kingdom. Allow me to briefly establish this to be the case.

**THE DELIVERANCE OF ISRAEL.** When Israel was delivered from Egypt, passing through the Red Sea, and Pharaoh and his armies destroyed, the report was spread to all surrounding areas. Num 22:5; Josh 2:10; 9:9).

⇒ **THE MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.** John the Baptist did not go to the people. He prepared the way for Jesus, but himself had no appointed harbinger. The people

**THE MULTITUDE COMES TOGETHER**

"<sup>6b</sup> . . . the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language."

The people had gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate the feast of Pentecost, yet their interest has suddenly

been turned to something else. We will find that it is more than a mere novelty that brings them together.

**THE MULTITUDE CAME TOGETHER**

" . . . the multitude came together . . ." Other versions read, "a crowd came

together,"<sup>NIV</sup> "the crowd gathered,"<sup>NRSV</sup> "They all came together,"<sup>BBE</sup> "all the people collected together,"<sup>MRD</sup> "they gathered in a large crowd,"<sup>NAB</sup> "they came running to see what it was all about,"<sup>NLT</sup> "crowds came running to see what it was all about,"<sup>LIVING</sup> "a large group of them came together,"<sup>IE</sup> "they

came *crowding together*,” WEYMOUTH “*the crowd rushed together*,” ISV and “*a crowd quickly collected*.” PHILLIPS

There have been times when God called only one person, speaking to him alone, and in isolation. This is how he called Noah (Gen 6:13), Abraham (Gen 12:1-3), Jacob (Gen 28:12-15), and Moses (Ex 3:2-3). Their role in God’s dealings with humanity required this approach. **However, for the most part, when it came to blessing the populous, there came a point where they had to come together.** In these cases, isolation deprived the people, and left them in a state of ignorance. The interest of the people had to be turned from personal preferences to collective concerns. They had to cease living for themselves alone, and become a part of a greater and more extensive work. **One of the greater jeopardies of religion is when men become self-centered.** Twice it is said of Israel, “*In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes*” (Judg 17:6; 21:25). Men may call that liberty, but, when speaking of things relating to God, it is really a liability. Ponder how the “together factor” was made known in God’s dealings with men.

- ⇒ Israel came out of Egypt **together** (Ex 13:3).
- ⇒ Israel crossed the Red Sea **together** (Ex 14:22).
- ⇒ Israel received the Law **together** (Ex 24:7).
- ⇒ Israel crossed the Jordan river **together** (Josh 3:17).
- ⇒ Israel entered Canaan **together** (Josh 6:5).
- ⇒ The rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem required the people to work **together** (Neh 4:6).
- ⇒ New sinews, flesh, or skin came upon the bones in Ezekiel’s valley until they “*came together*” (Ezek 37:7).
- ⇒ The initial blessings of the day of Pentecost took place when the people were “*with one accord in one place*” (Acts 2:1).

- ⇒ The “*power of Christ*” was associated with the saints coming **together** (1 Cor 5:4).
- ⇒ Edification takes place when the “*whole church be come together into one place*” (1 Cor 14:23).
- ⇒ God’s ultimate objective is to gather all things “*together*” in Christ (Eph 1:10).

Israel was a nation that had been cultured for interest in the things of God. **With all of their imperfections, which were many, God had worked with them**

That is less than 3% of the week (168 hours). Even then, a lot of the time is not spent in an actual exposition or discussion of the Word of God. Time exposed to the word of God would be about 2 1/4 hours a week – if the people attend Lord’s day morning classes, and Wednesday as well. That would be a little over 1% of the week. The majority of professing Christians do not meet Lord’s day evening or Wednesday evening – times generally noted for their sparse attendance. Those people are exposed to the Word of God about 30 minutes a week, in rare cases, perhaps 45 minutes at the most. That is less than 1/2% of the

**Israel was a nation that had been cultured for interest in the things of God. With all of their imperfections, which were many, God had worked with them in such a way as to promote them being together in His presence.**

in such a way as to promote them being together in His presence. Paul itemizes the unique advantages that were given to them. They included “*the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen*” (Rom 9:4-5). While these did apply at the individual level, **their strength was made known primarily when they were together** – whether around Mount Sinai, camped around the tabernacle, or entering into the Temple.

On the day of Pentecost, the interest of the people who came together was kindled in the surroundings of honoring a commandment from God. This is the kind of people and culture in which the day of Pentecost took place.

Today’s church world is a vastly different kind of environment. It is characterized by an inordinate amount of self-interest. The average church spends a maximum of five hours a week together – that is, the ones that have gatherings Lord’s day and Wednesday evenings.

week such people are “gathered together in the name of the Lord.

In spite of these prevailing conditions, with a few exceptions, it is not uncommon to hear small thinking preachers challenge their congregations to take their faith “outside of these four walls.” **It seems to me that it is really time to get it inside the four walls, then it will be sure to “get outside,” just as it did on the day of Pentecost.**

If it seems as though I have taken this matter too far, that is only because we have a largely dead church on our hands. It is an environment in which the events of the day of Pentecost could never take place.

**CONFOUNDED**

“ . . . and were confounded . . . ” Other versions read, “*and were confused*,” NKJV “*and were bewildered*,” NASB “*in bewilderment*,” NIV “*and were greatly surprised*,” BBE “*and were astounded*,” GENEVA “*and they were agitated*,” MRD “*and were stunned*,” LIVING “*and were amazed*,” WEYMOUTH “*and was startled*,” ISV “*in great excitement*,”

WILLIAMS *“and they were astonished and bewildered.”* AMPLIFIED and *“were completely bewildered.”* PHILLIPS

When the people finally came together, they witnessed extraordinary phenomenon. They saw Jewish people, gathered together on a Jewish holy day, but conducting themselves in a wholly different manner. They could not account for or explain what they saw. **It extended beyond the border of ordinary human experience.** No merely human aptitude or ability could have created such a condition, and they knew it.

The word *“confounded”* means “to

24:4), *“astonied”* (Ezra 9:3-4; Isa 52:14; Dan 5:9), *“astonished”* (Lev 26:32; 1 Kgs 9:8; Matt 7:28; Mk 7:37), *“marveled”* (Psa 48:5; Matt 8:27; 9:33; Mk 15:5), and *“dismayed”* (1 Sam 17:11; 2 Kgs 19:26; Jer 8:9). Similar English words include *“consternation,” “confusion,” “bewildered,” “puzzled,” “baffled,” “dumbfounded,” “nonplused,”* and *“mystified.”*

There is a certain condition that exists in a state of unregeneracy that must be acknowledged. **It is that the “natural man,” or the “carnal mind,” cannot comprehend the things of God. They extend beyond the perimeter of**

*world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not* (John 1:11). Ponder also what is said of the Holy Spirit. *“Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him: for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you”* (John 14:17).

Thus, when these people came together, even though they were *“devout,”* and had been exposed to Word of God, and many of His manners, they were *“confounded”* by what they saw and heard. It did not conform to what they knew about the day of Pentecost – the *“feast of weeks.”* Their faculties of discernment were equal to what now faced them.

#### A Word About Practices and Observances

We are not as many, who oppose the observance of traditionally Christian holidays – like Christmas and Easter. **However, if the church does observe them, they ought to leave stale bread off of the table, and bring something fresh and unique for men to ponder.** There is enough mediocrity in the world without the church contributing to the mental garbage heaps men have made.

If the church is going to sing, let it be as a result of being *“filled with the Spirit,”* and the word of Christ dwelling *“richly”* in them. Let them teach and admonish one another in their songs, as they are exhorted (Eph 5:18-29; Col 3:16). Let their songs reflect their understanding, not their simplicity. Let the stench of the world not be found on their music.

Let no one tone down the message of the Gospel to make it more palatable to the unlearned and ignorant. If men cannot understand what is said, let a person with the mind of the Lord expound it to them – **but let no person try and attract the world with spiritual pablum and worldly sounds!**

All of these manners, and more, are reflected in the events of the day of Pentecost. The working of the Lord is always perfecting consistent with His Divine nature and eternal purpose.

**Let no one tone down the message of the Gospel to make it more palatable to the unlearned and ignorant. If men cannot understand what is said, let a person with the mind of the Lord expound it to them – but let no person try and attract the world with spiritual pablum and worldly sounds!**

pour together, mingle, confuse, and cause dismay,” ROBERTSON *“to confound or bewilder,”* THAYER *“confuse, stir up, cause dismay,”* FRIBERG *“to cause consternation, to confound,”* LOUW-NIDA and *“commingle, make ruinous, obliterate, to confound, make of none effect, frustrate.”* LIDDELL-SCOTT The meaning “poured together” is the picture of a building collapsing, thus causing confusing. **The idea here is that what these people saw and heard could not be processed by their minds.** They could not account for it. Later, it will be confirmed that the people knew precisely what was being said, but they were wholly unacquainted with the way it was being done. They could not explain it. The house of human logic caved in. Their reasoning powers were deprived of all of their strength. They could not associate what they saw with any previous experience. They could not even relate it to the Word of God, or anything that had been commanded them concerning observing the day of Pentecost.

Kindred words are *“amazed”* (Ex 15:15; Judges 20:41; Matt 12:23; 19:25), *“perplexed”* (Isa 22:5; Mic 7:4; Lk 9:7;

**their capability.** There is no question about the impotency of unregenerate mind.

⇨ *“For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, **neither indeed can be**”* (Rom 8:6-7).

⇨ *“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, **neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him**”* (1 Cor 2:9).

⇨ *“But the natural man **receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned**”* (1 Cor 2:14).

Take, for example, the Son of God, who was wisdom incarnate, God manifest in the flesh, and the ambulatory presence of God. It is said of Him, *“He was in the*

**WHAT THEY HEARD**

“ . . . because that every man heard them speak in his own language.” Other versions read, “every one heard them speak in his own language,”<sup>NKJV</sup> “they were each one hearing them speak in his own language,”<sup>NASB</sup> “each one heard them speaking in the native language of each,”<sup>NRSV</sup> “every man was hearing the words of the disciples in his special language,”<sup>BBE</sup> “each one heard them speaking in his own dialect,”<sup>DARBY</sup> “each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language,”<sup>NAU</sup> “to hear their own languages being spoken by the believers,”<sup>NLT</sup> “they were each one hearing them speaking in his proper dialect,”<sup>YLT</sup> and “to hear their own languages being spoken by the disciples.”<sup>LIVING</sup>

This was the first response to hearing a **real** gift of tongues! These words could not be said of by those visiting many assemblies boasting that they can speak in tongues. The visitors might marvel, but not because what they

heard was **understood!** We do not have to apologize for this observation. **Here, we are reading of something that God did.** If it does not comport with the public tongue speaking of the day, it is the responsibility of those who speak in tongues to see to it they do not contradict Scriptural examples of the same.

**What Was the Miracle**

Some have conjectured that the miracle was in the hearing of the people. In that case, the disciples would have spoken in an ordinary language, but would have been heard in a diversity of languages. However innocent this view may seem, it does not agree with the text.

- ⇨ The disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to **speak** with other languages (Acts 2:4a).
- ⇨ The Holy Spirit gave the disciples **utterance**. He is not said to have given hearing to the multitude (2:4b).
- ⇨ Every man heard the disciples **speak**

in their native language (2:6).

- ⇨ The multitude marveled that the **speakers** were Galileans, yet **spoke** in the native languages of their hearers (2:7-8).
- ⇨ Jesus had given the promise that the disciples would speak with “**new tongues**,” or languages (Mk 16:17).

**The miracle, then, was in the speaking, not the hearing.** The Spirit dispensed languages, not hearing aptitudes. If this was not the case, how could the hearers have been so astounded? Why would they have noted the natural inability of the speakers if the real miracle was their hearing. And, how would they possibly have known that it was a miracle of hearing? In such a case, how would they have known that the disciples were speaking one language and they were hearing another? How could the Spirit be poured out upon the disciples, and the effects of it register upon the crowd?

**THE RESPONSE OF THE MULTITUDE**

“ <sup>7a</sup> **And they were all amazed and marveled . . .**” Other versions read, “utterly amazed,”<sup>LIVING</sup> “Amazed and astonished,”<sup>NRSV</sup> “they were amazed and wondered,”<sup>RSV</sup> “they were full of wonder,”<sup>BBE</sup> “wondered at and marveled,”<sup>GENEVA</sup> “astounded, and in amazement,”<sup>NAB</sup> “were beside themselves in wonder,”<sup>NLT</sup> “were all amazed at this,”<sup>IE</sup> “stunned and amazed,”<sup>ISV</sup> “were perfectly astounded,”<sup>WILLIAMS</sup> “were beside themselves with amazement,”<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup> and “they were absolutely amazed.”<sup>PHILLIPS</sup>

There was no earthly explanation for what these people were seeing and hearing. It went beyond all human aptitude and training. It could not be produced by some form of trickery or deception. Further, there were no skeptics in the crowd – “they were **ALL amazed**.” No one doubted that something significant was happening – and there was an extremely large diversity of people present. Some would question why and how what they were beholding and

hearing was taking place, but no one doubted its reality.

**In a day when the philosophers have gained undue prominence within the professed church, and charlatans foist pretentious signs and wonders upon the church, it is important to know that what the Lord works is real.** There have always been people who did not receive a mighty work from God – as those who said Jesus cast out demons by the power of Beelzebub (Matt 12:24). **But they did not deny that the work itself had been**

**done.** When confronted with a man who had received his sight, though born blind, Jesus’ critics questioned the authority of Jesus, but they did not question the sight of the man (John 9:24). Some people doubted that the seeing man was the one who was born blind, saying he only looked like him. **But they did not question the fact of his sight** (John 9:8-10). When the chief priests and Pharisees called a council about the disruptive influence of Jesus upon their religion, **they acknowledged the reality of His miracles** (John 11:47). When Peter and

**In a day when the philosophers have gained undue prominence within the professed church, and charlatans foist pretentious signs and wonders upon the church, it is important to know that what the Lord works is real.**

John healed the lame man at the gate Beautiful, they encountered opposition from the Jewish leaders. Yet those leaders affirmed that a **“notable work” had been done, and they could “not deny it”**(Acts 4:16).

No one in their generation doubted that Israel was really delivered from Egypt. No one questioned that they really passed through the Red Sea, ate manna, or drank water that came from a rock. Everyone in Israel and among the Philistines knew that David slew Goliath. All those present knew that Daniel had been delivered from the lion’s den. No one doubted that Shadrach and Abednego actually came out of a fiery furnace with no evidence upon them that they were even in it. See, this is the manner of the Lord’s working. **It is of another order, and it is exceedingly**

Divorce, marital unfaithfulness, theft, extortion, division, hatred, malice – they are all found within the professing church. **There are even a whole category of professional therapists and counselors within the church who are hired to deal with these things.**

It is not unusual to hear preachers and teachers admit that the people are at fundamental variance with God, not agreeing with Him, and really desiring to do things contrary to His will. Some say Christians are really just like the Israelites of old, always resisting God and preferring to go in another direction.

The situation before us is this: we are faced with a people who say they are “Christian,” yet have no appetite for the Word of God, which sustains Christians. They profess to be in the family of God,

**The situation before us is this: we are faced with a people who say they are “Christian,” yet have no appetite for the Word of God, which sustains Christians. They profess to be in the family of God, but have no profound love for the other members of the family, not preferring to gather frequently, or for any duration, with them. They say they are followers of Christ, who is not of this world, yet they have an obvious love for this world.**

apparent that it is real, even if men do not want to honor the One who did the work.

However, since the early times, a new kind of “Christianity” has risen to prominence. It is one that is noted for sham, pretension, and fraud. In this new form of “Christianity,” a change in the people is not required. **It is a religion of empty profession that allows its constituents to remain fundamentally like the world.** In fact, the structure of this religion presumes that the people have **not** really been changed. The church has all of the problems the world has.

but have no profound love for the other members of the family, not preferring to gather frequently, or for any duration, with them. They say they are followers of Christ, who is not of this world, yet they have an obvious love for this world. Their affection is not set on things above, but they say they want to go to heaven. They say they believe every word of the Bible, but they do not read it and meditate upon it. They say they believe God can do anything, but they seek help from the world instead of from Him.

**Everyone with any measure of discernment knows that these observations are really understated.** Yet,

they are so prevalent that some are thinking they are normal, and are really no cause for concern.

In the face of all of these things, we are now being confronted with a working of the Lord that caused all of the “devout” people to marvel. It did not produce a shred of indifference. Everyone knew that something was happening that could not be accounted for by human wisdom. **What they were seeing and hearing was not in the “ordinary” category, and everyone knew it.**

As “*the pillar and ground of the truth*”(1 Tim 3:15), the church is charged with the responsibility of setting the truth before the people. Not only must the message be authentic, but the power of it must be exhibited in those who proclaim it and have embraced it. **There is no place within the Kingdom of God for fundamentally unchanged people.** No Intercessor is provided for them (Heb7:25). No indwelling Spirit is promised to them (Gal 4:6). The “*things of the Spirit of God*” are not for them (1 Cor 2:14). The “*exceeding great and precious promises*” of God are not for them 2 Pet 1:4). The “*fruit of the Spirit*” is not intended for them (Gal 5:22-23). “*Things that pertain to life and godliness*” are not for them (2 Pet 1:3). **When the law of God has not been written into the hearts of people, and put into their minds, they are outside the circumference of the New Covenant** (Heb 10:16). If they do not “*know the Lord,*” being acquainted to some degree with His Person and ways, they are **not** beneficiaries of the New Covenant (Heb 8:11). God has blessed His people “*with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places*” (Heb 1:3), but any person who is himself not in those “*heavenly places*” has absolutely **no** access to them.

#### **IS THIS RELATED TO OUR TEXT?**

It may appear that these observations are wholly unrelated to our text, and are nothing more than a strong opinion. However, when we consider what follows, it will become apparent that they are, indeed, related to our text. **Now we will be confronted with a people who did something their kind of people simply could not do.** They were doing things that were really impossible.

**THE TONGUES – THE MIRACLE OF SPEECH**

<sup>7b</sup> . . . saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? <sup>8</sup> And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?"

The people who are seeing and hearing these disciples assess the situation. They cannot find an answer for what is going on within the arsenals of human experience or understanding.

**SAYING ONE TO ANOTHER**

“ . . . saying one to another . . . ” Other versions read, “they asked,” NIV “saying among themselves,” GENEVA “they exclaimed,” LIVING and “they continued to say.” WILLIAMS

Real awakening begins when the people begin speaking to one another about the Gospel they have heard. This happened when John the Baptist started preaching.

⇒ “And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not” (Luke 3:15).

⇒ “And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?” (John 1:19-22).

**It was also so when Jesus walked among men.**

⇒ “And all bare Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?” (Luke 4:22).

⇒ “And when He was come into his own country, He taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were

astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?” (Matt 13:54).

⇒ “The officers answered, Never man spake like this man” (John 7:46).

⇒ “And it came to pass, when Jesus

elicits a human response of some kind.

This is confirmed by the experience of the believer – the real believer. In Christ there is a different motive for living – it is the hope of what will be experienced after life in this world, after the world passes away, and

**The point to be seen is that the working of God is so radically different from this world, it draws attention – either favorable or unfavorable. However, no one is strictly neutral or indifferent when the Lord works or speaks in their presence. They will praise or scoff; approach to Him or leave Him; open their hearts or close them; accept Him or oppose Him.**

had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at His doctrine: for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes” (Mat 7:29).

⇒ “Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet. Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee?” (John 7:41).

**The point to be seen is that the working of God is so radically different from this world, it draws attention – either favorable or unfavorable.** However, no one is strictly neutral or indifferent when the Lord works or speaks in their presence. They will praise or scoff; approach to Him or leave Him; open their hearts or close them; accept Him or oppose Him. **It is not possible for heavenly influences to be among men, for men to be aware of those influences, and yet remain indifferent to them.** There is something about God, Christ, and the Gospel that demand a response. This is because of the stark contrast between God and man, Christ and this world, and the Gospel and the wisdom of men. **There is such an obvious difference that it**

after the day of judgment. For those in Christ, this is a “good hope” (2 Thess 2:16). We are “begotten” in order to the possession of this “lively hope” (1 Pet 1:3), and are being “saved” by it (Rom 8:24). The difference in the life that is lived by this hope becomes very apparent because it contradicts the worldly manner of life. The observation of this difference is assumed – that is, **one of the underlying premises of Scripture is that people can see the difference this hope makes in ones manner of life.** This is why believers are admonished, “But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ” (1 Pet 3:16). There are several things to be noted in this text.

⇒ First, persecution is the result of the world perceiving the difference in the believer – a difference that is not admired.

- ⇨ Second, believers are to be glad, or happy, that the difference can be seen.
- ⇨ Third, we are to devote our whole heart to the “*Lord God*,” allowing no one else to sit upon its throne.
- ⇨ Fourth, the radical difference in our manner of life will provoke an inquiry by those who see it.
- ⇨ In order to neutralize the powerful effects of a holy life, those of the world will speak evil of, and falsely accuse, those who live for Christ.
- ⇨ By maintaining a good conscience, our lives, joined with the reason for our hope, will cause those who criticize us to be ashamed.

These principles are being lived out in our text. The Lord is **really** working. His people are **really** the ones in whom He is working. The results of that working are **really** being seen and heard. These things are producing a **very real** response among the people. That is the manner of the kingdom. **Where society is indifferent to the presence and message of the church, a very serious deficiency exists.**

### THE INSTRUMENTS – GALILAEANS

“. . . Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? . . .” Other versions read, “Look, are not all these which speak Galileans?”<sup>NKJV</sup> “Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans?”<sup>NASB</sup> “Are not all these people who are speaking Galileans?”<sup>NAB</sup> “These people are all from Galilee,”<sup>NLT</sup> “Are not all these who are talking Galileans?”<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup> and “Listen, surely all these speakers are Galileans?”<sup>PHILLIPS</sup>

How is it that these people were startled at Galileans speaking in such a manner?

Galileans were inhabitants of the region of Galilee. History tells us that they spoke “a dialect of the vernacular Syriac,”<sup>McClintok</sup> which was different from that of Judaea – another region of “*the land of the Jews*” (Acts 10:39). It was generally considered to be a crude

language, with a special tone that was regarded to be near barbaric. It might be likened to the speech of, what is called, a “hillbilly,” as compared to the more polished speech of a highly educated man. This manner of speech is what caused Peter to be detected as he sat in the room where Jesus was being tried: “*Surely you too are one of them; for the way you talk gives you away*”<sup>NASB</sup> (Matt 26:73). Mark writes of that event, “*Surely you are one of them; for you are a Galilean, and your speech shows it*” (Mark 14:70).

Jesus was raised and ministered in Galilee. You may remember that Nathaniel observed of Him, “*Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?*” (John 1:46). Also, this was a region which, in the minds of the people, was completely disassociated with any spokesman for God. Once, when Nicodemus spoke in defense of Jesus, and of the injustice of the Pharisees judging Him without hearing Him, the Pharisees responded, “*They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet*” (John 7:52).

Historically, some of opponents of Jesus and His disciples referred to them all as “Galileans.” **It was a term of derision, describing a people who were given no dignity, and were viewed as nearly barbaric.** Their manners did not match the requirements of a more cultured society.

**The point of marvel was that those with so little culture were speaking with such precision and obvious expertise.** They had not been educated in the schools of men, and yet spake as though they were. **They were doing something that, technically speaking they were not able to do.** Indeed, they had never done this before, yet they were doing it, and doing it well.

The time has come for the processing church to go back to its roots and consider its beginnings. Rather than going to the world to obtain the culture and training they imagine is necessary to deliver the message of God, **let them explain why this was not the method their Lord chose.** If they say their objectives require that they pursue the course they have chosen, then let them explain why their objectives differ from

those of God. What has led them to think in this manner? Is it anything in Scripture? Is it any word from Jesus? Is it seen in any example of Scripture?

### ON GALILEANS

“Galileans: one of the names of reproach given to the early Christians. It was the ordinary phrase of Julian the apostate, when he spoke of Christ or Christians. He was accustomed to call Christ ‘the Galilaeen God.’ Not only did he use this epithet himself, but made a law, requiring that no one should call the Christians by any other name, thinking thereby to abolish the name of Christians. He died fighting against them; and as he caught the blood in his hand which flowed from a wound in his side, he dashed it towards heaven, saying these memorable words: Vicisti, O Galilae! ‘Thou hast conquered, O Galilaeen!’”

*Bingham; Orig. Eccles. book 1, chapter 2, § 2.*

Mind you, it is not my intent to heap condemnation upon those who earnestly desire to serve the Lord. However, it is my desire to probe why the desires of contemporary church leaders are so different from those of the One they say they are following.

### Behold the Men the Lord Chose

We have a significant number of men who were chosen by God to deliver His message. Let me remind you of a few of them. Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Samuel, Moses, Elijah, Elisha, David, Ezra, Nehemiah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, John the Baptist, Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, Lebbaeus, Simon the Canaanite, Stephen, Philip the evangelist, Barnabas, Paul, Silas, Timothy, Titus, Jude, James the Lord’s brother, Luke.

**Which of these men provide an example of advantaging from worldly wisdom?** Is it Moses? After all, he was “*learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds*” (Acts 7:22). Did God employ that wisdom? Did He not wait for forty years before He called Moses while he was on the back side of the desert (Ex 3:1) – time enough for his repertoire of Egyptian

wisdom to diminish?

**The truth of the matter is that we have no example of a servant of God who employed wisdom acquired from the world to do His work.**

This is precisely the way the church begins in Acts. Just as surely as the ancient altar of the Lord did not have a tool of man raised upon it (Ex 20:25), **so the inauguration of the New Covenant was devoid of the flesh.** Nothing originating with man was in it – nothing at all. If such a thing had been there, it would have “*polluted*” the beginning of “*the day of salvation,*” just like man’s tools would have “*polluted*” the altar. That pollution would also have spread.

**Using Things Despised**

Here, at the very threshold of the beginning of “*the body of Christ,*” the Lord uses what was despised by men to accomplish His work. This is in strict accord with His revealed manner: “*But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath*

professional credentials. Luke was a doctor (Col 4:4). However, he was not chosen to write Scripture for that reason. The point to be seen is that **the work of God does not depend upon expertise learned from the world** that has been cursed, and from which we must be delivered.

If, on the day of Pentecost, a great orator like Tertullus (Acts 24:1) would have been speaking, is there anyone who imagines the words would have had greater weight? Is the Holy Spirit prone to speak through those who have impressive credentials and are cultured in a manner acceptable to the world? We do not have to speculate on this. Our text affirms that God used people who were derisively called “*Galileans*” – people who could not possibly have done this if the Holy Spirit had not given them “*utterance.*”

**WE HEAR IN OUR OWN TONGUE**

“*8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?*”

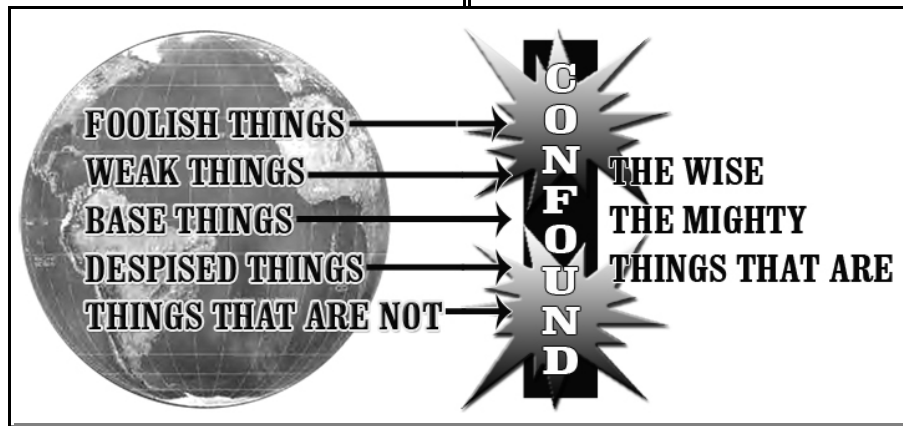
*languages of the lands where we were born,*”<sup>LIVING</sup> “*How then does each one of us hear his own native language spoken by them?*”<sup>WEYMOUTH</sup> “*Then how is it that each one of us hears them speak his own mother tongue?*”<sup>MONTGOMERY</sup> “*Then how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own (particular) dialect to which we were born?*”<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup> and “*Then how does it happen that every single one of us can hear the particular language he has known from a child?*”<sup>PHILLIPS</sup>

This is not how men would have done it! The Jews had their own tongue – “*the Hebrew tongue*” (John 5:2; Acts 21:40; 22:2; 26:14). Would it not have been better to speak in that language? And what of those who have given undue veneration to the Greek language. It is vaunted as being more precise, and more capable of communicating the truth. Why not deliver the message in that language? This is not to mention Latin, which was the language of Empire. Jesus had a sign over him while on the cross written in Greek (the universal language), Latin (the language of the Empire), and Hebrew (the language of the Jews). Why not confine the speaking to those languages. Would that not have meant any technical requirements? **The answer is that such an approach did not meet the Divine requirements, and that is why it was not used.**

There are at least three things that can be seen in this marvelous display of aptitudes given by the Spirit of God.

**A Global Salvation**

First, this is the announcement of a **global salvation.** It is intended, and is effectual to the fullest extent of the effects of sin. **There is no place among men where sin has reached, that salvation will not also reach.** Its provision will be realized by all who believe, regardless of their location or language. Paul wrote it this way: “*For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many . . . for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification . . . by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive*



*chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence*” (1 Cor 1:27-29).

It is not easy for some to accept this Divine mode. This is because it is properly denigrating to “*the flesh,*” for which no place has been made in Christ Jesus. It is not that it is sinful to be educated, learn a skill, or acquire

Other versions read, “*And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?*”<sup>NKJV</sup> “*Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language?*”<sup>NIV</sup> “*And how is it that every one of us is hearing their words in the language which was ours from our birth?*”<sup>BBE</sup> “*how do we hear them each in our own dialect in which we have been born,*”<sup>DARBY</sup> “*How does it happen that each of us hears them in his own native language?*”<sup>NJB</sup> “*yet we hear them speaking the languages of the lands where we were born!*”<sup>NLT</sup> “*and yet we hear them speaking all the native*

abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness **shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ . . . by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one **the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life . . . by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous . . . where sin abounded, grace did much more abound****" (Rom 5:15-20).

Later the Holy Spirit will move John to write that men would be redeemed to God "out of **every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation**" (Rev 5:9). Zechariah also prophesied of the universality of this great salvation. "Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold **out of all languages of the nations**, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you" (Zech 8:23). This is beginning to take place in our text.

#### A Personal Salvation

This occasion also confirmed the intensely **personal** nature of salvation. Every single person heard what was being said in their own personal native tongue. "Every man" heard it in the language of the land where he was born. **The word came from Jerusalem, but it was not for Jerusalem only.** This is a salvation, the Lord affirms, in which "they shall **all** know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them" (Jer 31:34; Heb 8:11).

#### A Harmonious Salvation

The word was heard in each language, but it was the **same** word. A difference in cultures did not require an adjustment of the message itself. Salvation is provided for sinners, not for this nation and that nation, or for men or women, or for rich or poor. **Sin does not reflect a respect of persons, and neither does salvation.** This is because "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). It is not possible for

the God of heaven to provide a partial remedy for a universal condition. If what sin caused – everything – cannot be remedied by salvation, then it really is no salvation at all.

How marvelously the unique nature of salvation is summarized in the book of Ephesians. "There is **one** body, and **one** Spirit, even as ye are called in **one** hope of your calling; **one** Lord, **one** faith, **one** baptism, **one** God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph 4:6). Every facet of salvation is harmonious with its revealed intent – the eternal purpose of God, and that purpose is never contradicted! That purpose is to gather everything together in one. "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him" (Eph 1:10). From the beginning, this is made clear. It is not possible for God to do anything that is not in strict harmony with that aim. That should be evident.

## THE DIVERSITY OF THE CROWD

"<sup>9</sup> **Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia,** <sup>10</sup> **Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,** <sup>11a</sup> **Cretes and Arabians."**

We should not be surprised that from the very first day, the diversity of those being saved is emphasized. If it is true that in Christ there is "neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28), then this will be reflected at the very first opening of the door of salvation. If it is true that "there is no respect of persons with God" (Rom 2:11), then it will be confirmed in the events taking place on the day of Pentecost. If "One died for all" (2 Cor 5:14-15), and "all things" belong to all saints (1 Cor 3:21), then from the very beginning salvation will be realized by a vast panorama of people. If "all spiritual

blessings" have been provided for all who are raised up with Jesus and made to sit together with Him in the heavenly places (Eph 1:3; 2:7), then we can expect this

advantages because of their position in this world. The flesh, together with every single one of its traits, cannot possibly bring a spiritual advantage or

**There is no second class salvation or second-rate benefits. In this salvation, there are none who gain spiritual advantages because of their position in this world. The flesh, together with every single one of its traits, cannot possibly bring a spiritual advantage or opportunity to anyone – not so much as a single soul.**

circumstance to be verified by the very first people who hear the message of that salvation.

There is no second class salvation or second-rate benefits. In this salvation, there are none who gain spiritual

opportunity to anyone – not so much as a single soul. No person becomes inferior because of their flesh-and-blood birth, or their station in this world. No kingdom benefits are withheld from a person because of where they were born, their nationality, or where they reside.

Further, because this salvation delivers humanity from this present evil world (Gal 1:4), how can it be possible for any distinction pertaining to this world to impose limitations upon those delivered from it?

All of this may seem quite apparent, but there are vast numbers of believers who are being treated as though they are second-rate citizens in the Kingdom of God. The restriction may be based upon their age, their gender, their attainments, their color . . . etc. But when we come to the day of Pentecost – a day which set the tone for all of time unto the coming of the Lord, no such restrictions will be found!

In this text we will see the reality

**In this text we will see the reality of the dispersing of the Jews after the era of the kings, and before the birth of Christ. The prophets often spoke of this dispersion, affirming that God would regather the Jews into their own land.**

of the dispersing of the Jews after the era of the kings, and before the birth of Christ. The prophets often spoke of this dispersion, affirming that God would regather the Jews into their own land. Some years after Pentecost, James wrote his epistle to dispersed Jews: “James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting” (James 1:1). Peter did the same, referring to their status in Christ: “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia” (1 Pet 1:1).

Moses prophesied of this scattering: “I said, I would scatter them into corners, I would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men” (Deu 32:26).

Prior to Pentecost, various prophecies were delivered to the dispersed Jews – prophecies that kindled the flame of hope, as the purpose of God was declared.

⇒ “And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the **dispersed** of Judah from the four corners of the earth” (Isa 11:12).

⇒ “And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the **outcasts** in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem” (Isa 27:13).

⇒ “I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: **bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth**” (Isa 43:6).

⇒ “And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted. Behold, **these shall come from far**: and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim” (Isa 49:11-12).

⇒ “The Lord GOD which **gathereth the outcasts of Israel** saith, Yet will I gather others to him, beside those that are gathered unto him” (Isa 56:8).

⇒ “Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, **He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock**” (Jer 31:10).

⇒ “Yet will I leave a remnant, that ye may have some that shall escape the sword among the nations, when ye shall be **scattered through the countries**” (Ezek 6:8).

⇒ “Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord

GOD; Although **I have cast them far off among the heathen**, and although I have **scattered them among the countries**, yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come. Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord GOD: **I will even gather you from the people**, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been **scattered**, and I will give you the land of Israel” (Ezek 11:16-17).

⇒ “And I will bring you out from the people, and will **gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered**, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out” (Ezek 20:34).

⇒ “I will accept you with your sweet savor, when I bring you out from the people, and **gather you out of the countries wherein ye have been scattered**; and I will be sanctified in you before the heathen” (Ezek 20:41).

⇒ “Thus saith the Lord GOD: When **I shall have gathered the house of Israel from the people among whom they are scattered**, and shall be sanctified in them in the sight of the heathen, then shall they dwell in their land that I have given to my servant Jacob” (Ezek 28:25).

⇒ “And **they were scattered**, because there is no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when **they were scattered**. My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, **My flock was scattered** upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them” (Ezek 34:5-6).

⇒ “As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his **sheep that are scattered**: so **will I seek out my sheep**, and will deliver them out of all places **where they have been scattered** in the cloudy and dark day” (Ezek 34:12).

⇒ “Because ye have thrust with side and with shoulder, and pushed all the diseased with your horns, till ye have **scattered them abroad**: Therefore **will I save my flock**, and

they shall no more be a prey; and I will judge between cattle and cattle” (Ezek 34:21- 22).

- ⇒ “And I scattered them among the heathen, and they were dispersed through the countries: according to their way and according to their doings I judged them” (Ezek 36:19).
- ⇒ “I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land” (Joel 3:2).
- ⇒ “From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my suppliants, even the daughter of

**My dispersed, shall bring mine offering” (Zeph 3:10).**

Even in Jesus’ day, there was a keen awareness of the many Jews that were still dispersed: “Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go, that we shall not find him? will he go unto **the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles?**” (John 7:35).

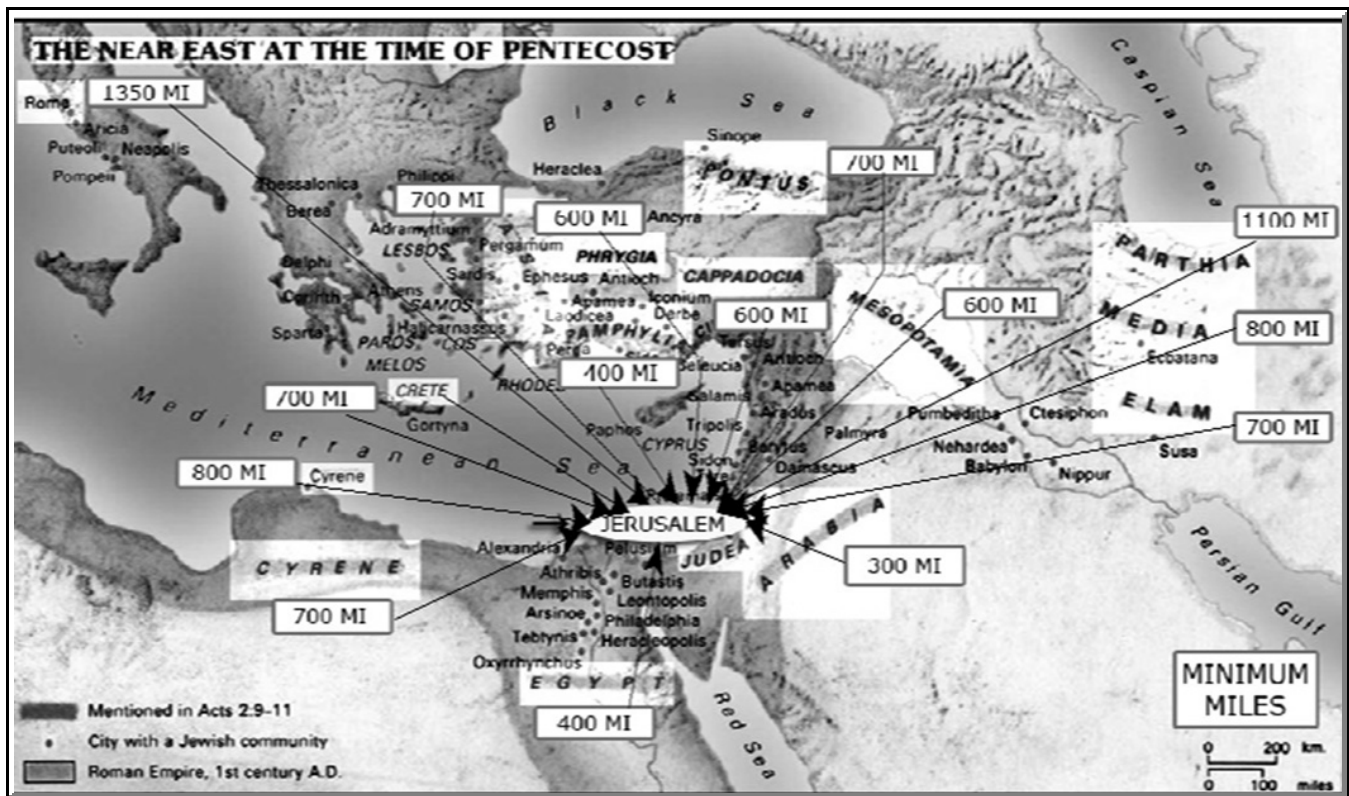
From these texts, together with the one before us, several key things ought to be noted.

- ⇒ Israel was scattered by God because of their transgression.
- ⇒ God has made a commitment to gather them from the countries

through which they were dispersed.

- ⇒ At the time of Christ, Israel itself was keenly aware of this dispersion.
- ⇒ The Jews had not lost their identity in the nations throughout which they were dispersed. Our text confirms this to be the case, for they came to Jerusalem from many of these nations – and were clearly identified as “Jews” (2:5). They were scattered, yet remained known.

Our text takes place on the day of Pentecost – the harvest firstfruits. As such, it is a pledge of the future gathering of all of the dispersed Jews. The manner in which the Lord works will reveal much of Himself.



The listing of the nations commences in the East, and goes toward the West. All of the areas are ancient areas.

**PARTHIANS**

“Parthians . . .” Other versions read, “Men of Parthia.”<sup>BBE</sup> This was a mountainous region lying to the

northeast of Media. It extended from India to the Tigris River, and was a part of Persia. The people have been referred to as descendants of Abraham by

Katurah. <sup>McCLINTOK</sup> The Parthian empire, present in the first century, lasted for a period of 400 years, and was considered very significant. As the crow flies, this country was approximately 1,100 miles from Jerusalem. This is the only Scriptural reference to this area and its inhabitants.

#### MEDES

“ . . . and Medes . . . ” Other versions read, “*Men of . . . Media.*” <sup>BBE</sup> This country was also associated with Persia, lying to the Northwest of Persia Proper. It was a smaller country, being about 150,000 square miles in size – about 3/4 the size of modern France. Media was prominent in the history of Esther (Esth 1:3,14,18; 10:2). Isaiah mentions Media as being instrumental in the judgments of God (Isa 21:2). Daniel prophesied of “*the kings of Media and Persia,*” who overthrew the Babylonian kingdom (Dan 8:20). As the crow flies, Media was about 800 miles from Jerusalem.

#### ELAMITES

“ . . . and Elamites . . . ” This territory was to the south of Assyria and east of Persia. At one time, Daniel states that he was “*at Shushan in the palace, which is in the province of Elam*” (Dan 8:2). This identified Elam with the same general area as Parthia and Media. This was an ancient area, being mentioned in Genesis 14:1. It appears from Genesis 10:22 that this country was originally populated by the offspring of Shem, one of Noah’s three sons. As the crow flies, Elam was about 700 miles from Jerusalem.

#### DWELLERS IN MESOPOTAMIA

“ . . . and the dwellers in Mesopotamia . . . ” This is considered to be the entire region between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Abraham was called from this area (Acts 7:2). Isaac obtained his wife from this area (Gen 24:10). The mysterious prophet Balaam, who prophesied for wages, was also from this area (Deut 23:4). Significant Bible cities in this area include Ur (Gen 11:27-28), Haran (Gen 11:31-32), Charchemiah (2 Chron 35:20), Hena (2 Kgs 19:13), and Sepharvaim (2 Kgs 17:24). Now some citizens of this area come for Pentecost. As the crow flies, Mesopotamia was about 600 miles from Jerusalem.

#### JUDAEA

“ . . . and in Judaea . . . ” For some, the inclusion of Judea offers some problems, because that is the area in which Jerusalem itself was located. However, those who were speaking were not from Judea, but were remaining in Jerusalem according to the word of Jesus – not because they lived there. We understand Judea to be mentioned because the language spoken in that part of Israel was different than the more rough dialect of the Galileans. It is also mentioned to highlight the diversity of the languages being spoken on this memorable occasion.

#### CAPPADOCIA

“ . . . and Cappadocia . . . ” This was an area in Asia Minor. It is said by ancient Greek writers that this place was noted for its wickedness. History tells us it was converted to Christianity. <sup>ALBERT BARNES</sup> Peter wrote his first epistle to converted Jews who lived in this place (1 Pet 1:1). As the crow flies, this area was about 600 miles from Jerusalem.

#### PONTUS

“ . . . in Pontus . . . ” This was another province in Asia Minor, and was situated close to Cappadocia. It was the birthplace of Aquila, who, with his wife, were faithful workers with Paul (Acts 18:2). Peter also addressed his first epistle to Jewish brethren in this area (1 Pet 1:1). As the crow flies, this area was about 700 miles from Jerusalem.

#### ASIA

“ . . . and Asia . . . ” This area was west of Cappadocia and Pontus, and is frequently mentioned in Scripture (Acts 6:9; 19:10,22,25,27,31). Tychicus and Trophimus, known for laboring with Paul, were from this area (Acts 20:4). Early in the history of the church, the Holy Spirit forbade the gospel to be preached in Asia (Acts 16:6). That ban, however, was eventually lifted. Ephesus was the capital of Asia. This was the area in which the seven churches were located to whom John wrote the book of the Revelation (Rev 1:4). As the crow flies, this was about 700 miles from Jerusalem.

#### PHRYGIA

<sup>10</sup> *Phrygia . . .* This was another province in Asia Minor, surrounded by Galatia, Cappadocia, and Pamphylia. It

is thought that their language was pure Greek. Paul and Timothy preached extensively in this area (Acts 16:6). Paul went through the area again, strengthening the churches there (Acts 18:23). As the crow flies, this was about 600 miles from Jerusalem.

#### PAMPHYLIA

“ . . . and Pamphylia . . . ” This was also in Asia Minor. When Paul and the company with him came to this area, John Mark departed from them, returning to Jerusalem (Acts 13:13) – something that greatly irritated Paul (Acts 15:38). As the crow flies, this was about 400 miles from Jerusalem.

#### EGYPT

“ . . . in Egypt . . . ” This was an extensive country, well known to the Jews. At the time of our text, the language used there was the Coptic language. History tells us that the first translation of Moses and the Prophets into the Greek language took place here (the Septuagint Versions). <sup>ALBERT BARNES</sup> It was located to the south of Jerusalem. As the crow flies, this was about 400 miles from the holy city.

#### PARTS OF LIBYA ABOUT CYRENE

“ . . . and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene . . . ” Other versions read, “*the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene,*” <sup>NKJV</sup> “*the districts of Libya around Cyrene,*” <sup>NASB</sup> and “*parts of Libya belong to Cyrene.*” <sup>NRSV</sup> Libya is the general name for Africa. The Greeks gave it the name “Africa.” Ezekiel mentions this area, associating it with Ethiopia (Ezek 30:5; 38:5). As the crow flies, it was about 700-800 miles from Jerusalem.

#### ROME – JEWS AND PROSELYTES

“ . . . and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes . . . ” These were certain Jews who had taken up residence in Rome, the capital of Italy. A great number of Jews lived there at this time. “*Proselytes*” are Gentiles who were converted to Judaism. The Pharisees were noted for working hard to make proselytes (Matt 23:15). One of the first deacons, Nicolas, was a “*proselyte*” (Acts 6:5). In Antioch, a great number of proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, intensely interested in their message (Acts 13:43). Josephus says there were eight synagogues in Rome. <sup>ALBERT BARNES</sup>

Some years after Pentecost, Claudius commanded all Jews to depart from Rome. This forced Aquila and Priscilla to leave that area and go to Corinth (Acts 18:1-2). As the crow flies, Rome was about 1,350 miles from Jerusalem.

### CRETES

“ . . . *Cretes* . . . ” Crete is an island in the Mediterranean sea. It is 200 miles long and 50 miles wide. In Paul’s travels, he touched this island (Acts 27:7-8,13). Paul left Titus there to “*set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city*” (Tit 1:5). The Cretians were noted for their deceptive ways. One of their own prophets said, “*The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies [lazy gluttons]*” (Tit 1:12-13). As the crow flies, Crete was about 700 miles from Jerusalem.

### ARABIANS

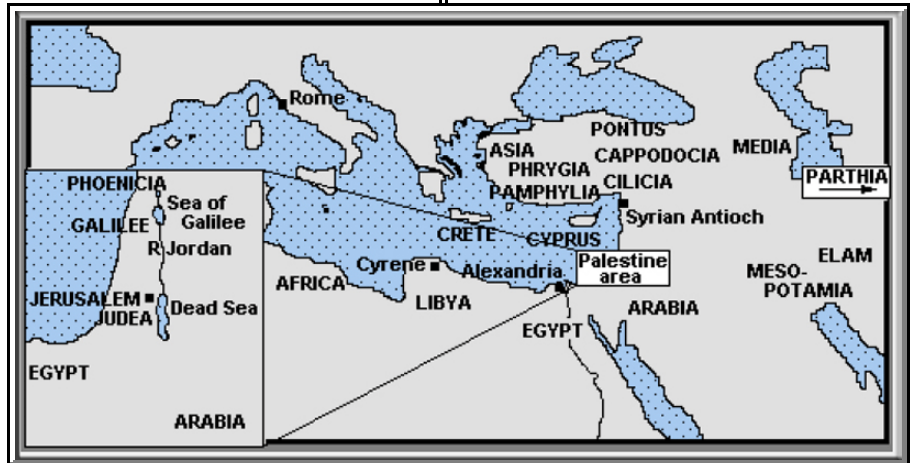
“ . . . *and Arabians*” Arabia is a large peninsula with Syria to the North, the Euphrates on the East, the Indian ocean on the South, and the Red Sea on the West. Isaiah prophesied against Arabia (Isa 21:13). This is the area into which Paul entered shortly after Jesus appeared to him and called him to the apostleship (Gal 1:17). Mount Sinai is also in Arabia (Gal 4:25). As the crow flies, this was about 300 miles from Jerusalem.

### WHAT BROUGHT THESE PEOPLE TO JERUSALEM?

What brought this remarkable melting pot of people to Jerusalem? From one point of view, it was the feast of

Pentecost. Even so, that was quite remarkable, for Jews were not noted for faithfully keeping their Divinely appointed feasts. Once, in the days of king Josiah, a glorious passover was

men were drawn into Jerusalem by the Living God – drawn, as it were, to the Lord Jesus (John 6:44). He *allured* them into Jerusalem like Hosea said He allured Israel into the wilderness.



observed. Although their observance conformed strictly to the instructions of the Lord, it was said of that Passover, “*And there was no passover like to that kept in Israel from the days of Samuel the prophet; neither did all the kings of Israel keep such a passover as Josiah kept, and the priests, and the Levites, and all Judah and Israel that were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem*” (2 Chron 35:18). Yet, during the Passover of our text, “*devote men*” flooded into the city from many different regions.

“*Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her*” (Hosea 2:14).

The Lord drew these “*devout men*” to Jerusalem to fulfill the promise of Joel and other prophets. He brought them in to gather a firstfruit harvest of the nation – a pledge of an even greater harvest to come that would involve the whole of the nation of Israel (Rom 11:15-26). He also brought them in as a firstfruit harvest of the world – the time when the whole field will be reaped according to Revelation 14:15-16.

From a higher perspective, these

## WHAT THEY WERE HEARING

<sup>41b</sup> . . . *we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.*” Other versions read, “*the mighty deeds of God,*”<sup>NASB</sup> “*the wonders of God,*”<sup>NIV</sup> “*God’s deeds of power,*”<sup>NRSV</sup> “*the great works of God,*”<sup>BBE</sup> “*the great things of God,*”<sup>DARBY</sup> “*the mighty acts of God,*”<sup>NAB</sup> “*the marvels of God,*”<sup>NJB</sup> “*the wonderful things God has done,*”<sup>NLT</sup> “*the mighty miracles of God,*”<sup>LIVING</sup> “*the wonderful things they are saying about God,*”<sup>IE</sup> and “*the magnificence of God.*”<sup>PHILLIPS</sup>

We are witnessing the Lord Himself at work! The disciples – all of them – are speaking in different languages as the Spirit of God “*gave them utterance.*” The Holy Spirit not only enabled them to speak in languages they had not learned, He also gave them the message to deliver. What is it that the disciples were saying in these various languages?

FOR “DEVOUT MEN”

This particular verse is important because it reveals something essential about the work of the Lord – **particularly of the manner in which the interest of people is solicited.** In order to draw the hearts and minds of the people, a **word** was being delivered. The disciples did not prepare a banquet to draw in the people. They did not engage in various entertaining activities, descending down into the arena of carnal interests. First, the appeal drew the attention of “*devout*

men.” It was Divinely calculated to do precisely that.

The events of the day of Pentecost contrast sharply with the manner in which the modern church is trying to attract the people. This was not simply a language-speaking display, with unlearned Galileans merely speaking in other difficult and more sophisticated languages. That might have drawn a crowd of linguists, but would have no appeal to “*devout men*.”

Keep in mind that both Jesus and

the *devout persons*, and in the market place with them that met with Him” (Acts 17:17).

I understand that there were others who heard the Gospel. However, they did not hear “*another Gospel*,” or one that was especially tailored for them. There is only one valid Gospel, and it centers in the Lord, not men. It is an “*everlasting Gospel*” (Rev 14:6) that has remained unchanged through the ages. It does not require some special adaptation to reach certain cultures. It is fully adequate to be declared in a synagogue (Acts 18:4), a market (Acts 17:17), on a

What kind of message were these people hearing? What had the Holy Spirit of God moved these people to say? Was it a message of what men could be? Was it a word concerning prosperity? Were they hearing words about how to be successful, or how to conquer failure in its various forms? Precisely what was the content of the message they were hearing?

We are not left to conjecture. The Spirit speaks expressly on this matter. They were hearing “*the wonderful works of God!*” That is, they were hearing a message of what God Himself had done! This was the proclamation of Divine accomplishments, not human possibilities or obligations!

The expression “*wonderful works*” is the translation of a single Greek word: μεγαλεια (mega-laia). The lexical meaning of this word is works that are “magnificent, excellent, splendid, wonderful . . . the mighty works of God, the glorious perfections of God and His marvelous doings,” THAYER “great, powerful, splendid, the mighty acts, powerful works,” FRIBERG “prominence, greatness, importance,” LOUW-NIDA “magnificent, splendid, mighty works, splendidly.” LIDDELL-SCOTT

#### What Was NOT the Subject

The great works of God are numerous and impressive. Yet, on this day, when “*the promise of the Father*” was being realized, there are certain works that were NOT the heart of the message.

#### NOT the Works of Creation

The people to whom, the Holy Spirit had given utterance were not speaking of the wonderful works of creation. These were, indeed, marvelous. However, these people were **not** speaking of God laying “*the foundations of the earth*” (Job 38:4-6). They were **not** declaring when God “*framed*” the worlds with His Word” (Heb 11:3), separating light from darkness (Gen 1:4), the waters above from the waters beneath (Gen 1:7), and the land from the water (Gen 1:9-10). They were not chronicling God’s creation of a vast array of plant life (Gen 1:11-12), sea life and the fowls of the air from water (Gen 1:20-22), and animal life (Gen 1:24-25). These were not the “*works*” being declared.

#### NOT the Marvels of Nature

**It ought to be noted that as soon as you adapt the Gospel to a certain group you must dilute it, for the Gospel itself is tailored for all men. If you modify this message to suit the interests of people, you must dilute it and rob it of its power. It is for all, and must be presented to all. A gospel that cannot be preached to everyone should not be preached to anyone!**

the apostles delivered a message that appealed to “*devout men*.” **That is why Jesus preached in synagogues** (Matt 4:23; 9:35; 12:9; 13:54; Mk 1:21,39; 3:1; 6:2; Lk 4:15,16,44; 6:6; 13:10). **It why He taught “daily” in the Temple** (Matt 21:14,23; 26:55; Mk 12:35; 14:19; Lk 19:47; 20:1; 21:37-38; 22:53; John 7:14,28; 8:2,20; 18:20). **It is why Paul preached in the synagogues** (Acts 9:20; 13:5,14; 14:1; 17:1-2,10,17; 18:4,19; 19:8). **It is why the early disciples taught much in the Temple** (Acts 2:46; 4:1; 5:20-21,25,42).

When the Gospel was first preached to the Gentiles, the Spirit sent Peter to the house of Cornelius, “*a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house*” (Acts 10:2). When the Gospel was sent into the regions of Macedonia, the Spirit send Paul to a river where prayer was being made by certain women (Acts 16:13). The message Paul preached in Thessalonica was embraced by a multitude of “*devout Greeks*” (Acts 17:4). When Paul was agitated with the pervasive idolatry of Athens he “*disputed in the synagogue with the Jews, and with*

desert highway (Acts 8:26), a special coliseum (Acts 17:19), an educational building (Acts 19:9), a place devoted to prayer (Acts 16:13), a prison (Acts 16:32), or in a political chamber (Acts 24:24-25).

Tragically, we are living in a day when professed preachers and teachers are delivering a word that has little or no appeal to “*devout men*.” It ought to be noted that **as soon as you adapt the Gospel to a certain group you must dilute it, for the Gospel itself is tailored for all men**. If you modify this message to suit the interests of people, you must dilute it and rob it of its power. It is for all, and must be presented to all. **A gospel that cannot be preached to everyone should not be preached to anyone!** The Western world needs to hear a word that has a strong appeal to “*devout*” people, and that challenges gross sinners to yearn to be “*devout*.” We must not allow the mega-church moguls of our time to divert our attention to “*another gospel*” (2 Cor 11:4).

#### WHAT DID THE PEOPLE HEAR IN THEIR NATIVE LANGUAGE?

Nor, indeed, were the marvels of nature the things being declared: *“the treasures of the snow,” “the treasures of the hail,”* discretionary *“rain,”* and *“drops of dew”* (Job 38:22,26-28). They were not speaking about the rising and setting of the sun (Eccl 1:5), establishing a boundary for the sea (Job 38:11), and the marvelous instincts of wildlife (Deut 32:11; Job 39:1-30; Jer 8:9). These were not the *“works”* being declared.

**NOT the Wonders Of Israel’s Deliverance**

Nor, indeed, were they rehearsing the many wonderful works that God had wrought upon and among the Israelites. He delivered them from Egypt (Deut 4:20,37), preceding their deliverance with ten mighty plagues (Ex 7:17-12:29; Deut 4:34; 26:8). In that deliverance He gave them favor with the Egyptians so that they gave them everything they required for their journey (Ex 12:36). He brought them through the Red Sea on dry ground, then drowned Pharaoh and his armies in the same sea (Ex 14:22-29). However, these were not the *“wonderful works”* being declared by the speakers.

**NOT the Exploits Wrought in Israel**

During their journey to Canaan, God provided Israel miraculous meat (Num 11:21-23,31-33), fed them with miraculous bread (Deut 8:3,16; Josh 5:12), provided them rivers of water from a wilderness rock (Ex 17:6; Num 20:11; Psa 78:16; 114:8), caused their clothing to remain new for forty years (Deut 8:4), and wrought countless miraculous deliverances among them (Ex 15:25; Ex 17:9-13; Deut 11:6-7; Num 17:1-7; Josh 3:14-17). Neither were these the *“mighty works”* now being spoken into the ears of these *“devout men.”*

**NOT the Miracles In Their Captivity**

When Judah was in the Babylonian captivity, some mighty miracles were wrought. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were delivered from a fiery furnace, with not a single evidence of being in the furnace remaining of them (Dan 3:23-27). Daniel was delivered from a den of famished lions, spending an entire night with them (Dan 6:22). But these works were not what was being reported by the Spirit-filled disciples on the day of Pentecost.

**Why Were Not These Works Reported?**

There is a reason why the wonderful works just mentioned were not being reported. **None of these works had any redemptive power. None of them were integral to the New Covenant.** None of them can reconcile the world to God. None of them can remove sin, or make peace between God and sinful man. None of them could provide a **basis** upon which men could be *“made acceptable”* to God. None of them required the *“the Word”* to be *“made flesh”* (John 1:14). None of them required Christ’s death, burial, resurrection, ascension, enthronement, or intercession. None of them could induct *“the day of salvation”* or *“the accepted time.”* This day was the beginning of *“the day of salvation,”* and a higher order of works were being declared.

**The Wonderful Works Being Reported**

The *“wonderful works”* of our text related specifically to the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. These were all accomplishments of God. **None of them were done by man.** They were, strictly and most precisely, *“the wonderful works of God.”*

All of the other works that I have just mentioned could have been heard in

*Him”* (1 John 4:9). *“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins”* (1 John 4:10). *“And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world”* (1 John 4:14).

⇒ **GOD CONFIRMING CHRIST.** *“And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”* (Matt 3:17). *“While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him”* (Mat 17:5). *“Ye men of Israel, hear these words; 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”* (Acts 2:22).

⇒ **CHRIST’S TRIUMPHANT DEATH.** *“Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted”* (Isa 53:4). *“For what the law could not do, in that it was*

**All of the other works that I have just mentioned could have been heard in the local synagogues. The Pharisees and scribes knew of those works very well. But the ones that the people were now hearing declared were not known among the people.**

the local synagogues. The Pharisees and scribes knew of those works very well. But the ones that the people were now hearing declared were not known among the people. Here is a brief sampling of the kind of works involves.

⇒ **GOD SENDING CHRIST.** *“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law”* (Gal 4:4). *“In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through*

*weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh”* (Rom 8:3). *“He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with him also freely give us all things?”* (Rom 8:32). *“For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin: that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him”* (2 Cor 5:21).

⇒ **CHRIST’S GLORIOUS RESURRECTION.** *“Whom God hath*

*raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it* (Acts 3:26). *"This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses"* (Acts 2:32). *"The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree"* (Acts 5:30).

⇒ **CHRIST'S ILLUMINATING APPEARANCES.** *"Him God raised up the third day, and showed Him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead."* (Acts 10:40-41).

2:33). *"And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father"* (Gal 4:6).

The priority of God the Father in redemption is seen in the frequency of the references to Him that are in the letters written to the churches. There are twenty references to "the Father" in the Epistles, and six hundred and sixty-two references to "God." At the highest level the "works" are His. As Jesus Himself said, *"Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwelleth in*

*redeemed Jacob, and glorified Himself in Israel"* (Isa 44:23).

The true value of a person or group of persons is found in the frequency of their references to "the wonderful works of God." The closer men are to the Lord, and the more they are "endued with power from on high," the more they speak of the works of God. I was raised in a church and institutional environment in which there were very few references to what the Lord had done. If it had not been for my beloved Father, who had understanding in these things, I suppose I would scarcely have heard of them at all. There was actually more talk about the "church fathers" and the "restoration fathers" than "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

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I well remember that after I had been preaching for several years, it finally registered upon my spirit how very little I had been talking about God, and of the Lord Jesus who is bringing us to Him (1 Pet 3:18). When, by the grace of God, I determined to remedy that situation, I was at once charged with being a Calvinist. I found that my "brethren" were not at all comfortable with all of the glory being given to God – even though it is written, *"For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen"* (Rom 11:36). However, that did not lend itself to the advancement of the institution. It is a great liberty to be freed from the shackles of human institutions and their corrupting influence.

**FOR CLARITY**

For purposes of clarity, we are being exposed to disciples who were filled with the Holy Spirit, and to the focus and content of their speaking. This is how men spoke when they were "endued with power from on high." This is the manner in which those who are filled with the Spirit speak. Here, we are exposed to the "mind of the Spirit" (Rom 8:27). Here is a message that heaven intends for men to know.

The assessment of their message is provided a vast array of "devout men" – men who have a heart for God, and are serious about their manner of life. Here is an environment in which God will work.

⇒ **CHRIST'S EXALTATION.** *"Wherefor God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name"* (Phil 2:9). *"Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places"* (Eph 1:20).

*me, He doeth the works"* (John 14:10).

This is how the inauguration of the New Covenant began: by proclaiming "the wonderful works of God." This is in strict accord with the prophecy of the sweet Psalmist of Israel: *"They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power"* (Psa 145:11). The restoration of a wayward people is characterized by such talk. As it is written, *"Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them. The LORD hath done great things for us: whereof we are glad"* (Psa 126:3). The heavens and the earth are not set to praising because of what men have done, but because of what the Lord has done. Thus it is written, *"Sing, O ye heavens: for the LORD hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the LORD hath*

⇒ **GOD SENDING FORTH HIS PROMISE.** *"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you"* (John 14:26). *"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of me"* (John 15:26). *"Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear"* (Acts

**CONSTERNATION!**

<sup>42</sup> *And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?*<sup>13</sup> *Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.*"

Here again, the Spirit emphasizes the total inability of the natural mind to account for what is happening. Today there are sundry things being done in the name of Jesus, some of which appear to be supernatural. Often, however, men can account for these things by causes that are not from God. Thus, for example, some healings are said to be nothing more than a psychosomatic phenomenon. Some trace effective alterations in human conduct to a twelve-step plan of recovery, or the human will, or some other humanly conceived procedure.

But on the day of Pentecost, there was absolutely no way for these men to legitimately account for what was happening. It simply dried up fleshly abilities to diagnose or account for what was being done. It is in the same category as one man killing a thousand seasoned warriors with the jawbone of an ass, or two aged people having a son, or the sun standing still, or a virgin conceiving. There simply is no human explanation for such things.

**AMAZED AND IN DOUBT**

*"And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?"* Other versions read, *"So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, 'Whatever could this mean?'"*<sup>NKJV</sup> *"And they all continued in amazement and great perplexity, saying to one another, 'What does this mean?'"*<sup>NASB</sup> *"And they were all surprised and in doubt saying to one another, 'What is the reason of this?'"*<sup>BBE</sup> *"And they all wondered and were astonished, saying one to another: 'From whom is this thing?'"*<sup>MRD</sup> *"And all were beside themselves with amazement and were puzzled and bewildered, saying one to another, 'What can this mean?'"*<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup> and *"Everyone was utterly amazed and did not know what to make of it. Indeed they kept saying to each other, 'What on earth can this mean?'"*<sup>PHILLIPS</sup>

Notice how these men have been said to respond to what they are seeing and hearing.

- ⇨ They were "confounded" (2:6).
- ⇨ They were all "amazed and marveled" (2:7).
- ⇨ They were all "amazed, and were in doubt" (2:12).

In these verses there are four different Greek words used to express the reaction of the listeners. They all are similar in meaning, with some slight variations.

- ⇨ συνεχύθη - "confounded" (2:6).

**human explanation.** This is why it is such a serious transgression to appeal to the wisdom of the world in matters pertaining to life and godliness. When it comes to the working of the Lord, professionals such as psychiatrists, motivators, sociologists, experts in physiology, statisticians, analysts, and medical experts can bring nothing to the table of explanation. What can experts like this clarify for us in the matter of regeneration, the cleansed conscience, a peace that governs the heart and mind, and a joy that overflows in the midst of great difficulties? How can they account for spiritual understanding, a dominating hope, or a resilient confidence and

**When it comes to the working of the Lord, professionals such as psychiatrists, motivators, sociologists, experts in physiology, statisticians, analysts, and medical experts can bring nothing to the table of explanation.**

Disturbed, bewildered, stirred up to tumult. Here there is an agitation brought on by the total inability to account for what is happening.

- ⇨ ἐξίσταντο - "amazed" (2:7,12). Astounded, to be out of one's mind. In this case, all that one can to is stand there with their mouth open.
- ⇨ ἐθαύμαζον - "marveled" (2:7). To wonder. Here the intellect is surprised and stunned by what is seen and heard - astonished.
- ⇨ διηπόρουν - "in doubt" (2:12). To be entirely at a loss, to be in perplexity.

In the case of "doubt," the mind challenges what is seen, questioning whether or not the senses can be trusted with what confronts them. The is mental perplexity, where all ability to account for the happening withers and dies.

**One of the great characteristics of the work of God is that it transcends all**

assurance? They can only feign explanations, for such things have been accomplished by a power that is transcendent to nature. When there is a period such as ours (the twenty-first century), when such men are given places of preeminence in the church, spiritual stupidity is inevitable. Men will be brought to wrong conclusions, just as surely as these "devout men" were when they were exposed to Divine workings.

By doubting, these men were saying, "Can this be true?" "I cannot believe my eyes and ears!" "This can't be happening!" On this day, however, matters will not end with human consternation! The God who is working will provide the explanation for what is happening.

**THE MOCKERS**

<sup>13</sup> *Others mocking . . .* Other versions read, *"But others were mocking,"*<sup>NASB</sup> *"Some, however, made fun of them,"*<sup>NIV</sup> *"But others sneered"*<sup>NRSV</sup> *"But others, making sport of them,"*<sup>BBE</sup>

"Others however ridiculed them" <sup>MRD</sup>  
 "Some, however, made fun of them," <sup>NIB</sup>  
 "Some, however, laughed it off," <sup>NJB</sup> "But  
 others in the crowd were mocking," <sup>NLT</sup>  
 "But others, scornfully jeering," <sup>WEYMOUTH</sup>  
 "But others made a joke of it," <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>  
 and "But there were others who laughed  
mockingly," <sup>PHILLIPS</sup>

When something happens that is too much for the human intellect, some resort to "mocking," attempting to laugh off what is happening as though it was some deviate expression. The word from which "mocking" is translated has the following lexical meaning: "jesting, to deride, jeer," <sup>THAYER</sup> "of derisive behavior, jeer, scoff, sneer," <sup>FRIBERG</sup> "make fun of," <sup>UBS</sup> "to make fun of someone by joking or jesting," <sup>LOUW-NIDA</sup> "to joke, jest, scoff, jeer . . . to mock, scoff at." <sup>LIDDELL-SCOTT</sup>

**Paul** encountered this kind of response when he spoke of the resurrection of the dead in Athens. "And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some **mocked**: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter" (Acts 17:32). **Ishmael "mocked"** Isaac, chiding him and making fun of him (Gen 21:9). **Some foolish children** made the mistake of **mocking** Elijah (2 Kgs 2:23). In the time of Nehemiah, a man named **Sanballot "mocked"** the Jews who were rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem (Neh 4:1).

**Mocking is the attempt of flesh to shake off the influence of truth.** It is the reaction of the natural man to something he does not understand. Rather than inquiring further into the matter, what is seen is simply brushed aside with some foolish explanation.

#### FULL OF NEW WINE

" . . . said; These men are full of new wine." Other versions read, "They are full of sweet wine," <sup>NASB</sup> "They have had too much wine," <sup>NIV</sup> "They are filled with new wine," <sup>NRSV</sup> "They have drunken new wine, and are intoxicated," <sup>MRD</sup> "They have had too much wine" {Or sweet wine}, <sup>NIB</sup> "They're drunk, that's all! they said," <sup>NLT</sup> "They are brim-full of sweet wine," <sup>WEYMOUTH</sup> "They are simply drunk and full of sweet [intoxicating] wine," <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup> and "These fellows have drunk too much new wine!" <sup>PHILLIPS</sup>

This was not an intellectual

**assessment, but an attempt to brush the whole matter aside.** A serious mind could not conclude that hearing men speak in many different languages – all of which were known to the hearers – was something resulting from intoxication. Drunkenness garbles the speech, it does not bring more versatility to it. That is why this is called "mocking." What these men laughed at, saying it was absurd, was nothing to compare with the absurdity of affirming "that strong drink can teach languages." <sup>Dr McLerlland</sup>

Throughout history this has often been the tactic of those subjected to the people of God. For example "the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch" (Acts 11:26). This was not a complimentary statement. The word "Christian" means "of Christ," or "a follower of Christ." Instead of the citizenry of Antioch inquiring into the spread of the truth in that area – "a whole year" – they simply brushed aside the whole phenomenon by saying the people were followers of Christ – **a Christ they themselves did not embrace.** Similarly, when Festus heard the convicting words of Paul, he cast them from him with a mocking reply: "much learning doth make thee mad" (Acts 26:24). Who can forget what Jesus' critics said of Him: "Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners" (Matt 11:19). Again, certain people brushed aside the words of Christ saying, "Thou hast a devil" (John 7:20), and "Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan and hast a devil?" (John 8:48).

It is ever true, "But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, **even so it is now**" (Gal 4:29). That text refers to Ishmael **mocking** Isaac – an occasion which resulted in him and his mother being expelled from the house of Abraham (Gal 4:30; Gen 21:9-14).

Thus these mockers attempt to cast aspersions upon those who are miraculously speaking in their own native tongue. For them, marveling led to mockery instead of inquiry.

#### New Wine

Precisely what is "new wine?" The expression itself suggests it was not what the Scriptures refer to as "strong

drink." The Greek word from which "new wine" is translated is Γλεύκος (glu-cose).

#### NEW WINE

"One of the methods in use among the Greeks and Romans of doing this was the following: An amphora or jar was taken and coated with pitch within and without, and was then filled with the juice which flowed from the grapes before they had been fully trodden, and was then corked so as to be air-tight. It was then immersed in a tank of cold water or buried in the sand, and allowed to remain six weeks or two months. The contents after this process were found to remain unchanged for a year, and hence, the name αει γλεύκω – always sweet. The process was not much unlike what is so common now of preserving fruits and vegetables. Sweet wine, which was probably the same as that mentioned here, is also mentioned in the Old Testament (Isaiah 49:26; Amos 9:13)." <sup>ALBERT BARNES</sup>

Its lexical meaning is, "the sweet juice pressed from the grape . . . sweet wine," <sup>THAYER</sup> "strictly unfermented juice of grapes; hence sweet new wine," <sup>FRIBERG</sup> "new, sweet wine in process of fermentation: sweet wine," <sup>LOUW-NIDA</sup> The prophets writings frequently refer to "new wine" or "sweet wine" (Isa 49:26; Hos 4:11; Joel 1:5; Amos 9:13; Zech 9:17). Jesus referred to putting "new wine" into old bottles, saying that it would cause them to break in the process of fermentation (Matt 9:17). Isaiah said "new wine" was found "in the cluster," from which it was pressed (Isa 65:8).

"New wine" was not the hard liquor with which men are familiar today. It was, indeed, intoxicating, but only when it was imbibed in enormous quantities. In this case, much of the fermentation actually occurred **after** it was ingested. Paul refers to this kind of drinking when he wrote, "And be not drunk with wine, **wherein is excess**; but be filled with the Spirit" (Eph 5:18).

However, even though the disciples were not being charged with being persistent drunkards, **they were being mocked.** By foolishly charging that they were "drunk with new wine," these men thought to reduce the impact of what they were hearing. They were seeking to shift the occasion from one of sobriety to one of levity, and from one of

wisdom to one of foolishness.

It should not surprise us that men refuse to receive the truth when it is so plainly and evidently declared. In this text *“the wonderful works of God”* were being reported in the native tongues of the people. **It is not possible for the truth to be more plainly presented to the human intellect.**

And yet, with all of this apparenancy, there were some who

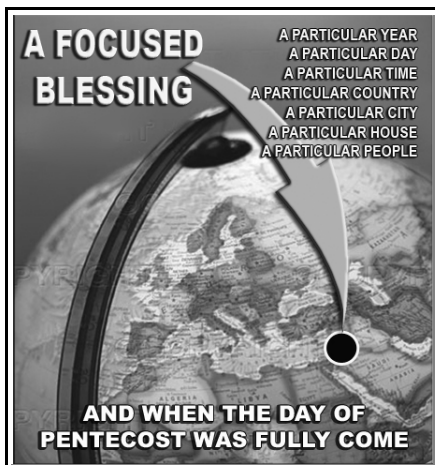
*“mocked,”* charging the disciples with being excessively full of new wine. Such a charge is utterly ridiculous, and could in no way be supported by any form of sound reasoning.

That, of course, is precisely how the flesh and the natural mind responds when the truth of God is brought within its grasp. The *“things of the Spirit of God . . . are foolishness”* to the natural men – even when they are *“devout,”* and have traveled many miles to observe a God-

ordained feast (1 Cor 2:14). Do not be stunned when you encounter such things.

The stage has now been set for a remarkable exposition of the events concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. The vehicles through whom, the Lord will work have been duly prepared, and the audience to whom they will speak have been drawn together, and their attention has been captured for the moment. All of those is the Lord’s doing.

## CONCLUSION



The remarkable precision associated with the day of Pentecost is worthy of much contemplation. It reflects the nature of God, His ways, the manner of His kingdom, and the effectiveness of His work. The events of this day took place in a particular year, on a particular day, and at a particular time. They were focused on a particular country, in a particular city, on a particular house, and upon a particular people. **That is how precisely the Lord’s purposes are fulfilled.** Those are also associations that have been made with the *“great salvation”* that is in Christ Jesus *“with eternal glory”* (2 Tim 2:10).

You have probably noticed that as soon as *“the day of Pentecost was fully come,”* things began to happen in strict accord with the promises of Christ. He had promised His disciples, *“For John*

*truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence”* (Acts 1:5). He had assured them, *“I send the promise the promise of My Father upon you,”* and *“ye shall be endured with power from on high”* in Jerusalem (Lk 24:49). The twelve were particularly told that the Holy Spirit would teach them *“all things”* (John 14:26a), bringing what Jesus had said to them to their *“remembrance”* (John 14:26b). The Spirit would *“testify”* of Christ to them (John 15:26), and they would *“bear witness”* of Him (John 15:27). He would *“guide”* them *“into all truth,”* *“show”* them *“things to come,”* and *“show”* to them the things He received from Christ (John 16:13-14). Now, in strict accord with these promises, the day of Pentecost has arrived, and these things are beginning to happen.

**Divine purposes are always executed in a timely manner.** When the time for Noah’s deliverance came, he entered into the ark **“the selfsame day”** (Gen 7:23). When the “appointed” time for Isaac to be born arrived, the birth occurred **“at the set time of which God had spoken to him”** (Gen 21:2). When the time for Israel’s deliverance from Egypt arrived, **“it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt”** (Ex 12:41). To emphasize the truth, it is stated again: **“And it came to pass the selfsame day, that the LORD did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their armies”** (Ex 12:51).

Jesus came into the world *“when the fullness of the time was come”* (Gal 4:4). When the very **“hour”** appointed for the commencement of Christ’s death arrived, the powers of darkness were loosed and went to work (Lk 22:53). When the exact time for Christ’s resurrection arrived, He burst forth from the tomb, taking up His life again on *“the third day,”* as He was commanded (Luke 24:46; Acts 10:40)

**Within the New Covenant, men are brought into the realm in which Divine appointments are made and carried out with meticulous precision** (Eph 2:6). Satan cannot stop, alter, or modify a single one of them – something that has been confirmed by the execution of revealed will of God. Men must learn that this is the case, for it is essential for their assurance and confidence. No one has or can speak like God in this regard: **“The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand”** (Isa 14:24). Again He testifies, **“Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass: I have purposed it, I will also do it”** (Isa 46:10-11).

**Nebuchadnezzar** was precisely correct when he praised the God of heaven, **“I blessed the most High, and I praised and honored Him that liveth for**

ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" (Dan 4:34-35).

**Gamaliel** was right when he observed, "But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God" (Acts 5:39).

Satan and all the powers of darkness blinded and bound all humanity. The whole world remained

under his sway (1 John 5:19). Not a single one of Adam's offspring successfully stood against Him. Yet, he could not stop Jesus from being born! He could not remove Him after He was born, and was a helpless child. He could not stop Him from growing up, increasing in wisdom, and stature, and in favor with God and man. He could not thwart the vicarious death of Christ, in which the sins of the world were taken away and his own head was bruised. He could not stop the resurrection of Christ, through which He was "declared to be the Son of God with power" (Rom 1:4). He was powerless to stop Jesus from appearing to His disciples after He rose from the dead, and teaching them of things pertaining to

the Kingdom of God. He could not stop Him from ascending back into heaven, being given all power in heaven and earth, and being seated at the right hand of God. He could not stop the day of Pentecost from coming. He could not stop Jesus from sending forth the Holy Spirit, or His disciples from being filled with the Spirit, or them speaking with insight and power concerning "the wonderful works of God." In these things he was impotent.

You may be sure, our adversary will not have power to thwart the completion of what is being started on this marvelous day of Pentecost of our text. The work of God will be completed – even in you personally (Phil 1:6)!

**Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 7/21/2006. In this session, we continue our current series of lessons on the book of Acts. The seventh lesson will cover verses fourteen through twenty-one of the second chapter: "PETER INTERPRETS THE EVENTS OF THE DAY." The people have gathered to witness the extraordinary events that are taking place. Some have simply marveled. Others associate the events with drunkenness. Peter will provide an inspired interpretation of the events – one he himself perceives. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.**

*The Blakely Family: Given, June, Benjamin, Jonathan<sup>and</sup> Mattie, and Eva  
406 South Sergeant Street, Joplin, MO 64801*

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Telephone: (417) 782-3063, Email: Given (GivenB@aol.com) June: (JuneE01@aol.com)

**ADAH's Webpage: <http://wotruth.com/adah.htm> -- EVA's Webpage: <http://wotruth.com/Eva.htm>**

Benjamin (Bensvison@aol.com), Eva (Evablakely@aol.com)

Adah Hutchcraft (adahhutchcraft@hotmail.com), Jason Hutchcraft (hcchurch@interlink-cafe.com)

**WORD OF TRUTH Website: <http://wotruth.com>**

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**Note: Due to the distance traveled from the above Renewal, the first Hungry Saints Meeting for August, originally scheduled for 8/4/2006, will be moved to the following week: 8/11/2006. This will mean we will have our Friday meetings for two consecutive weeks, 8/11/2006 and 8/18/2006. Please make this notation on your schedule.**