

# 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 #7

#### COMMENTARY ON: 2:14-21

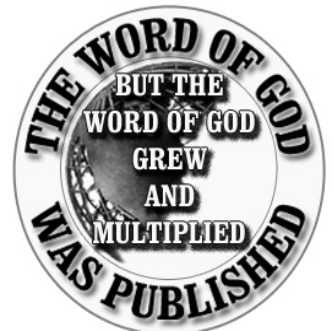
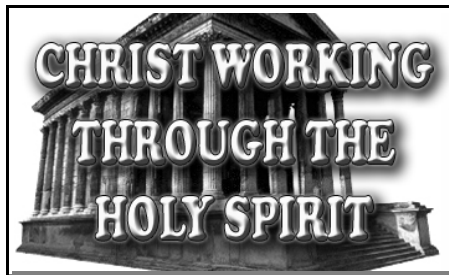
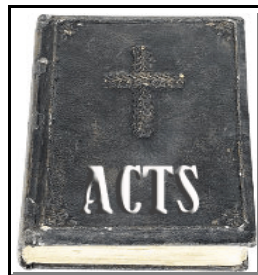
#### PETER INTERPRETS THE EVENTS OF THE DAY

God will not leave it to men to assess the events of the day of Pentecost. Those who must be saved cannot be trusted to properly interpret the working of the Lord. Peter will therefore tell the people what is really happening, and how it is the fulfillment of the promises of the prophets. It has always been God's manner to interpret what is made known to those who do not have His mind. Whether it is the dreams of Pharaoh, the visions of Nebuchadnezzar, or the Scriptures themselves to an inquiring official from Ethiopia, truth must be expounded to the unlearned. Sin so blights the natural mind that it cannot clearly see what God is making known. If nothing else, it will constrain one to stand aghast at something that has to do with delivering him from this present evil world according to the will of God and our Father (Gal 1:4).

### 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)

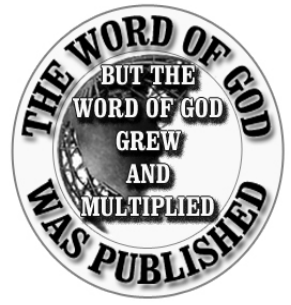


Since May, 1993, a ministry instituted for the encouragement of believers in Christ



## The Book of Acts

### Lesson Number 7



**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), **CSB - Holman Christian Std** (1999), **DRA** = Douay-Rheims (1899), **ESV** = English Standard Version (2001), **GWN - God's Word** (1995), **IE** = International English, **ISV** = International Standard Version (1967), **JPS** = Jewish Publication 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), **NET - The Net Bible** (2004), **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 **GINGRICH** = Gingrich

**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**

----- 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.

# PETER INTERPRETS THE EVENTS OF THE DAY

“ 2:14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: 15 For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. 16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; 17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: 18 And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: 19 And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: 20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: 21 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (Acts 2:14-21)

## INTRODUCTION

God will not leave it to men to assess the events of the day of Pentecost, voicing, as it were, their own opinions about what has taken place. **Those who must themselves be saved cannot be trusted to properly interpret the working of the Lord.** It makes little difference how

seemingly expert they are in Scripture, or diagnosing what they see. A logical mind is, of itself, of no value in this matter.

In confirmation of this, behold what conclusions have already been expressed. These are the observations of

“*devout men,*” cultured under a Divinely given law.

⇒ They were “*amazed and marveled*” (2:7a).

⇒ They properly observed that Galilean

*The events of the day are too significant for their meaning to be deciphered by anyone uninspired. by Given O. Blakely*

## CONTENTS

- PETER STAND UP WITH THE ELEVEN (2:14a)
- THOSE ADDRESSED, AND WHY PETER SPEAKS (2:14b)
- IT IS NOT WHAT SOME OF YOU THINK (2:15)
- THIS IS WHAT JOEL PROPHESED (2:16)
- THE SPIRIT Poured OUT UPON ALL FLESH (2:17a)
- SONS AND DAUGHTERS WILL PROPHECY (2:17b)
- YOUNG AND OLD WILL HAVE INSIGHT (2:17c)
- SERVANTS AND HANDMAIDENS WILL PROPHECY (2:18)
- WONDERS IN HEAVEN, AND SIGNS UPON EARTH (2:19)
- NATURE BLIGHTED (2:20)
- A UNIVERSAL PROMISE (2:21)
- CONCLUSION

were speaking (2:7b).

- ⇒ They were confused because these men were speaking in the native languages of the hearers (2:8).
- ⇒ They pondered how it was possible for them to be hearing of the wonderful works of God in their own language, and from crude Galileans at that (2:11).
- ⇒ They were all amazed and perplexed about these events (2:12a).
- ⇒ Some of them, overcome with much perplexity, doubted, and asked what this could possibly mean (2:12b).
- ⇒ Some mocked, saying that the speakers were filled with new wine.

Now, are these the kind of people whose judgment can be trusted? Remember, they were “*devout men*.” Yet, with all of their devotion, God had not revealed to them what was really taking place. That explanation must come from someone who has been privy to what the

Lord was doing.

Peter will therefore tell the people what is really happening, and how it is the fulfillment of the promises of the prophets.

It has always been God’s manner to interpret what is made known to those who do not have His mind. **This is because men cannot discover the mind of the Lord, or arrive at an understanding of His purposes by means of academics or pedagogy.** Whether it is the dreams of Pharaoh, the visions of Nebuchadnezzar, or the Scriptures themselves being read by an inquiring official from Ethiopia, **truth must be expounded to the unlearned.** Sin has so blighted the natural mind that it cannot comprehend any initial exposure to the mind and purposes of the Lord. If nothing else, it will constrain people, like those in our text, to stand aghast at even the intellectually clear proclamation of “*the wonderful works of God.*”

### PREPARING OUR MINDS

It is necessary that we prepare our minds for what Peter will say on this occasion. While men are prone to consider what happened to the disciples, and particularly to the apostles, on this occasion, **Peter will proclaim what happened to Christ.** In fact, he will not make a single reference to the apostles themselves, and will refer to the experience of the disciples as something foretold by the prophets. In other words, this is nothing less than the outworking of the purpose of God, settled before the foundation of the world, and prophesied by holy men who were moved by the Holy Spirit. **However, as important as human experience may be, it is not the heart of the Gospel message.** The heart of Peter’s message will not be what men get, but what God gives. Technically, that may appear to be the same, but the emphasis

is significantly different.

What men desire, and what men can receive may seem to be of paramount importance. However, the truth of the matter is that what **God** desires, and what **He** gives is ALL important. **The only significance that can be found in the will of man occurs when it is brought into harmony with the mind of the Lord.** The only desires of men that have lasting legitimacy are those which reach out for what God has promised and provided in Christ Jesus.

**Those who represent themselves as speaking for the Lord must have a proper view of things. They cannot be wrong in their emphasis.** The foundation of their reasoning cannot be erroneous, or subject to obsolescence. Their perception of fundamental issues cannot be distorted. They must have an acute awareness of the primary Person, the core message, and the appointed objectives of redemption.

It simply is not possible for an “*eternal purpose*” to focus upon a temporal need, a purely earthly circumstance, or something that is not integral to man’s association with God Himself. It may sound comforting to assert that God is interested in every single aspect of your life – but where is the support for such a notion? If it is so, then why did Jesus refuse to come to the aid of that young man who requested that He speak to his brother about their inheritance (Lk 12:13)? Why, when there were “*many widows in Israel,*” did God choose to work in the behalf of a Gentile widow (Lk 4:25)? Even though “*many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elijah,*” why did the Lord heal a Syrian leper (Lk 4:27)? Why did Jesus say to the people while He remained among them, “*For ye have the poor always with you*” (Matt 26:11). **If Jesus came to**

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resolve human difficulty, why did He not deliver the poor of His own people from poverty while He was among them? Why, not two months after Jesus concluded His

the Lord Jesus Christ. In the text before us, Peter will **not** give any attention to the earthly conditions of men. He will, **not** hold Jesus up as the answer to

something that the Law does well (Rom 3:19-20; Gal 3:24-25). If **“this present evil world”** forms the boundary of human thought, the Jesus of the Gospel will make no sense to men.

Because of its elemental nature, in a sense, this is, what might be called, “Theology 101.” Notwithstanding, because of the prevailing thrust of American Christianity, it is necessary to buttress both our faith and our conscience on this matter.

Sin not only defiled humanity itself, but the entire realm that was made for its habitation. It has been revealed that death, or mortality, has been imposed upon the entire creation. This is referred to as *“the bondage of corruption.”* Thus it is written, *“For the creature was made **subject to vanity**, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from **the bondage of corruption** into the glorious liberty of the children of God”* (Rom 8:20-21). This is condition from which creation cannot extricate itself. **Contrary to the wicked theory of evolution, things are actually devolving, not evolving.** They are decaying, dying, and passing away. This also applies to **everything** that is limited to the created realm. That is, the *“fashion of this world”* is also passing away (1 Cor 7:31).

In addition to this, the entire human race – the offspring of Adam – is also passing away, and by nature is totally unacceptable. This circumstance requires two things that can only be accomplished by Deity. First, man must be fundamentally changed – born again. Secondly, he must be delivered from the domain of death, or the realm of mortality. **If either of these things does not occur, all hope vanishes like smoke.** The heavens and the earth, and everything in them, will ultimately pass away (Matt 245:35; 1 John 2:17). As for mankind, *“it is appointed unto man once to die, but after this the judgment”* (Heb 9:27).

Salvation is calculated to take men out of the world, effectively separating them from that order. Therefore it is written that God visits humanity *“to take out of them a people for His name”* (Acts 15:14). It is also

## AN ETERNAL INHERITANCE

### PREPARING THE PEOPLE FOR THE INHERITANCE

#### ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES

#### TAKING OUT A PEOPLE A PEOPLE FOR HIS NAME

The place from which we are being delivered cannot be the place of emphasis or of the primary blessing!

## THIS PRESENT EVIL WORLD

ministry, was there a man lame from his mother's womb still being placed at one of the Temple gates (Acts 3:2)? He was over forty years old (Acts 4:22). Had they failed to place him at the gate when Jesus was daily teaching in the Temple (Matt 26:55). If Jesus' came to heal the sick, why was this man still lame?

Although there should be no necessity to say so, this by no means diminishes the compassion of the Lord, as confirmed in the countless people He healed while among us. **However, it also confirms that this was not the focus of His ministry.**

As grievous as man's physical and interpersonal relations are, they are not the driving cause behind the ministry of

human problems as men perceive them. He will **not** present Jesus as the answer to deviate behavior, domestic difficulty, or various forms of social disorder. He will **not** say that Jesus is the way to fulfill your dreams, reach your goals, stabilize your finances, and secure success. These **are** things that men proclaim, but there is a glaring and consistent absence of them in apostolic doctrine.

**If men have no driving compulsion to have their sins remitted, be reconciled to God, be at peace with God, and obtain an eternal inheritance, the only minister who can help them is Moses.** They must be led to the point where they see a need for Jesus as defined in the Gospel – and that is

written that Jesus died to *“deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father”* (Gal 1:4). In view of this circumstance, Jesus told His disciples, *“I have chosen you out of the world”* (John 15:19). From an even higher vantage point, the Father gave Jesus people *“out of the world”* (John 127:6) in order that He might *“bring them to glory”* (Heb 2:10). This is because the inheritance to, or for, which they were *“begotten”* (1 Pet 1:3-4) is an *“eternal”* one (Heb 9:15). As such, it is not possible that it can be realized by men *“in the flesh,”* or *“in the world.”*

This is precisely why all believers are admonished, *“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him”* (1 John 2:15). This is not a mere prohibition, or a legal matter. It is something that makes perfect sense to faith. If we have been delivered from the world, and no longer belong to it, and if our inheritance is eternal and apart from it, what possible reason can be given for lusting after what is of the world? Of necessity, this includes everything pertaining to temporary life – **everything!** Such things cannot become our focus without forfeiting what Jesus really came to do. **Only a person who is in the grip of delusion can choose life in this world as a priority.**

The fuller benefits of being in Christ will be revealed **after** the earth passes away. They will be realized **after** men have met their appointment with death. They will be received **after** the day of judgment, the dismissal of Satan and his hosts, and the consignment of the damned to the lake of fire. At that time the purpose of salvation will be **fully** comprehended as well as experienced.

#### PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

I have said these things because

the second chapter of Acts deals with the beginning of *“the day of salvation.”* **Here** is where the direction of Kingdom labors will be established. **Here** is where the nature of the Gospel message will be confirmed. **Here** is where the priority, as well as the necessity, of the Lord Jesus will be affirmed. **Peter will preach a message that will clarify what has**

teaching, and much is made of this mythical approach. While this method seems to be honest and quite safe, that is not at all the case. **The truth of the matter is that this view allows for certain texts of Scripture to remain basically offensive to the individual.** By pointing to another text, and seemingly acknowledging the truth of it, the offence

**God will be declared to be doing precisely what He promised to do. If this declaration contradicts what men preach or teach, then their teaching and preaching must be immediately forsaken. In such a case, there is not the slightest chance that it is true.**

**happened.** He will do so by anchoring the minds of the people to the word of the Lord – particularly as expressed in the prophets. **God will be declared to be doing precisely what He promised to do.** If this declaration contradicts what men preach or teach, then their teaching and preaching must be immediately forsaken. In such a case, there is not the slightest chance that it is true. What is here said of New Covenant life will not be contradicted later by inspired men, for God is not capable of such contradiction. **If what men say is required within the church conflicts with what Peter here declares to be what God promised, then men are wrong, and we are to pay no heed to what they say.**

#### HARMONIZING THE BIBLE

Some, taking upon themselves to explain how God thinks, have introduced a certain approach to Scripture that neatly allows for them to entertain erroneous views. They call it *“harmonizing the Scripture.”* By this they mean that truth is assembled something like a puzzle, which infers that it is basically disjointed as presented in the written word. In this view, it is very important to present *“balance”* in the

of the other text is neutralized, and everyone remains happy. For example, people like this cannot put statements together like *“a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law”* (Rom 3:28) and *“by works a man is justified, and not by faith only”* (James 2:24). Thus, when they read, *“justified by faith”* (Rom 5:1), they affirm that expression must be tied together with James 2:24 to get at its true meaning. Therefore, the truth is actually constructed by men piecing together a collage of carefully selected texts that satisfy the theology they have already accepted.

I will tell you up front that Peter’s words will not fit handily into any man-made theology. **They will appear to deceived people as though they are not complete enough, not thorough enough.** Their scope will seem too small, and their breadth too narrow. However, after all is said and done, the Holy Spirit will take the words of Peter and convince those who murdered Jesus that they have done the wrong thing, and that they must make amends. After all philosophizing is done, that circumstance confirms that God was, in fact, speaking through Peter. We do well to give heed to his words.

## PETER STANDS UP WITH THE ELEVEN

*“2:14a But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them . . .”*

Until this time **all** of the disciples have been speaking, declaring *“the wonderful works of God”* in the native

languages of *“devout men out of every nation under heaven.”* **Now the attention shifts to Peter and the eleven – the**

*The events of the day are too significant for their meaning to be deciphered by anyone uninspired. by Given O. Blakely*

**twelve apostles.** The church is built upon the foundation that they will lay, in strict accord with the declarations of the prophets of old. As it is written, *“And are built upon **the foundation of the apostles and prophets**, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone”* (Eph 2:20). Again Paul referred to this arrangement: *“Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto **His holy apostles and prophets** by the Spirit”* (Eph 3:5). In his epistle to scattered Jewish believers, Peter also refers to this circumstance. *“That ye may be mindful of the words*

Therefore, now that the people have gathered together, the apostles step forward to fulfill their ministry.

**PETER**

*“But Peter . . . ”* Other versions read, *“Then Peter,”*<sup>NIV</sup> *“And afterwards Simon Cephas,”*<sup>MRD</sup> and *“and Peter,”*<sup>YLT</sup> *“Peter however.”*<sup>WEYMOUTH</sup>

Peter was the leading man among the apostles. In all of the listings of these men, Peter is first (Matt 10:1-4; Mk 3:15-19; Lk 6:13-16; Acts 1:13-14). When the inner circle of three are mentioned, Peter

<sup>BBE</sup> *“rose up, **with the eleven legates,**”*<sup>MRD</sup> *“stepped forward with the eleven,”*<sup>NLT</sup> *“standing forth with the eleven,”*<sup>RWB</sup> *“having stood up with the eleven,”*<sup>YLT</sup> *“together with the Eleven,”*<sup>WEYMOUTH</sup> and *“with **the eleven standing by Him.**”*<sup>PHILLIPS</sup>

There are three ways in which this text is viewed.

- ⇒ That Peter rose up with the eleven who were already standing and speaking.
- ⇒ That all twelve stood up at this time, with Peter stepping forward as the spokesman.
- ⇒ That Peter stood up with the eleven standing up with him.

The idea here is that Peter stood up as one who had a grasp of the situation, and **“the eleven”** joined him in a show of unity and mutual understanding. The others probably joined in the speaking in an orderly manner, yet the Spirit brings Peter to the forefront of the occasion. He had been prepared for this moment, and seized the opportunity with zeal and insight.

Up to this point, as Peter will confirm, **all of the disciples had been speaking as the Spirit gave them utterance.** Now, however, the emphasis shifts to the twelve, and they move into the spiritual limelight. Just as within the whole church, they are **“first”** among the redeemed, not isolated from them (1 Cor 12:28). Those who teach that **only** the twelve were gathered together, and **only** the twelve were filled with the Spirit, and **only** the twelve spoke in other languages as the Spirit gave them utterance, are in sharp conflict with the Spirit’s representation of the body of Christ. Such an approach violates the prophecy that Peter said was being fulfilled in the presence of his listeners.

Notice that Luke states Peter stood up *“with the eleven,”* thereby confirming that Matthias was, indeed, *“numbered with the eleven apostles,”* filling the vacated bishopric of Judas (1:26). Those, therefore, who say that Peter took it upon himself to replace Judas, and that Matthias was really not

**The significance of Peter is confirmed by the frequency of the references to him. The Gospels refer to him one hundred and six times. There are 54 references to Peter in the book of Acts, and twelve in the epistles.**

*which were spoken before by **the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Savior”*** (2 Pet 3:2). Jude, the half brother of our Lord, also referred to the priority of the words of the apostles. *“But, beloved, remember ye the words which were **spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ”*** (Jude 1:17).

*“The apostles”* (the twelve) are prominent in the book of Acts, being mentioned no less than twenty-eight times (1:2; 2:37,42,43; 4:33,35,36,37; 5:2, 12,18,34,40; 6:6; 8:1,14, 18; 9:27; 11:1; 14:4,14; 15:2,4,6,22,23,33; 16:4). They were not always considered by themselves, but were often linked with others. *“The apostles **and brethren that were in Judaea”*** (11:1), *“the apostles **and elders”*** (15:2,4,6,22,23; 16:4).

However, when it came to rank, the apostles were placed **“first”** in the church (1 Cor 12:28). Their message and insight was more full, adapting them to initiate the actual building of the body of Christ, who worked uniquely with them. This is why they were chosen to accompany Jesus throughout His entire earthly ministry – to **“be with Him,”** and to be sent forth **“to preach”** (Mk 3:14).

is always first (Matt 17:1; Mk 5:37; 9:2; Mk 14:33; Lk 8:51; 9:28). When Jesus delivered the Olivet discourse to four of His disciples, Peter was the first one listed (Mk 13:3). When He rose from the dead, Jesus appeared to Peter first, then to **“the twelve”** (1 Cor 15:5). Following his conversion and call to the apostleship, Paul went up to Jerusalem **“to see Peter,”** but saw none of the other apostles (Gal 1:18-19). Paul said the **“Gospel of the circumcision”** was given **“unto Peter,”** as the chief among the twelve (Gal 2:7-8).

The significance of Peter is confirmed by the frequency of the references to him. The Gospels refer to him one hundred and six times. There are 54 references to Peter in the book of Acts, and twelve in the epistles.

**Now Peter rises in his appointed role, taking the lead to which He had been appointed, and for which he had been chosen.**

**STANDING UP WITH THE ELEVEN**

*“ . . . standing up with the eleven . . . ”* Other versions read, *“taking his stand with the eleven,”*<sup>NASB</sup> *“stood up with the Eleven,”*<sup>NIV</sup> *“standing **with the eleven,**”*<sup>NRSV</sup> *“getting up, with the eleven,”*

the twelfth apostle, could not possibly be more wrong – and they are foolish besides. “The twelve” are also mentioned in the sixth chapter as being in charge of the church, gathering them together to appoint the first deacons (6:2).

**LIFTED UP HIS VOICE**

“... lifted up his voice...” Other versions read, “**raised his voice**,”<sup>NKJV</sup> “**said in a loud voice**,”<sup>BBE</sup> “**elevated his voice**,”<sup>MRD</sup> “**and shouted**,”<sup>NLT</sup> and “**spoke loudly**,”<sup>IE</sup>

If the Holy Spirit makes a point of this, then we ought to give due heed to what is said. Peter spoke to be heard, for there is no point to speaking if one cannot be heard. God gave the following instructions to the Levites, who were to read all the curses of the Law to the people: “**And the Levites shall speak, and say unto all the men of Israel with a loud voice**” (Deut 27:14). When Solomon blessed all of the people at the dedication of the Temple, he did so with a “**loud voice**”: “**And he stood, and blessed all the congregation of Israel with a loud voice, saying**” (1 Kgs 8:55). God’s praise was also to be done with “**a loud voice**” (2 Chron 20:19; Neh 12:42; Psa 98:4).

The prophets frequently spoke of the voice being lifted up, thereby accenting the importance of what was being said.

- ⇒ **“Lift up thy voice, O daughter of Gallim: cause it to be heard unto Laish, O poor Anathoth”** (Isa 10:30).
- ⇒ **“O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it**

**up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!”** (Isa 40:9).

⇒ **“Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins”** (Isa 58:1).

⇒ **“Go up to Lebanon, and cry; and lift up thy voice in Bashan, and cry from**

“... and said unto them...” Other versions read, “**declared to them**,”<sup>NASB</sup> “**addressed the crowd**,”<sup>NIV</sup> “**addressed them**,”<sup>NRSV</sup> “**spake forth unto them**,”<sup>ASV</sup> and “**proclaimed to them**.”<sup>NAB</sup>

Peter did not “speak into the air” (1 Cor 14:9), but clearly and powerfully addressed the inquiring crowd. His words were not only inspired as to their content, they were focused as to their objective.

**This is a marvelous spiritual aptitude that those who speak for Christ must culture. They are to have a message from God that is addressed to the people. That requires an acute awareness of both the Lord and the audience – who is being represented, and to whom the word is being delivered.**

*the passages: for all thy lovers are destroyed”* (Jer 22:20).

It is not that this is a heartless law, or an empty routine that men are to adopt. **It is rather a way of loving the Lord with all of our “strength”** (Mk 12:30), **and using our capacities to their fullest when they are employed in the work of the Lord.**

Thus Peter’s voice rises to its peak, overshadowing the speaking going on among the multitude, and the reporting of the wonderful works of God by the other disciples. I gather that, at this point, the other speaking ceased as the attention of the people was drawn to an inspired explanation of the startling events they were witnessing.

**AND SAID UNTO THEM**

This is a marvelous spiritual aptitude that those who speak for Christ must culture. **They are to have a message from God that is addressed to the people.** That requires an acute awareness of both the Lord and the audience – who is being represented, and to whom the word is being delivered. This should bring empty academic lectures to a grinding halt within the church. **Impressive displays of knowledge have no real value if the word is not from God and particularly for the people.** This is what Solomon would call a word that is “**fitly spoken**,” or “**spoken in right circumstances**”<sup>NASB</sup> (Prov 25:11). Again, he referred to “**a word spoken in due season**” (Prov 15:23), and lips that give “**a right answer**” (Prov 24:26). The words Peter will speak will be, as Solomon stated, “**acceptable words**” (Ecc 12:10).

**THOSE ADDRESSED, AND WHY PETER SPEAKS**

“<sup>14b</sup> ... **Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words.**”

Peter aims his words like an archer aims his arrow. This is characteristic of a person speaking

through the Spirit.

**MEN OF JUDEA AND ALL DWELLING IN JERUSALEM**

“... **Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem**...” Other versions read, “**Men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem**,”<sup>NASB</sup> “**Fellow Jews**

and all of you who live in Jerusalem,”<sup>NIV</sup> “**Men of Judaea, and all ye inhabitants of Jerusalem**,”<sup>DARBY</sup> “**Men, Jews, and all ye who reside in Jerusalem**,”<sup>MRD</sup> “**fellow Jews and residents of Jerusalem**,”<sup>NLT</sup> “**Ye men of Jewry, and all ye that dwell in Jerusalem**,”<sup>PNT</sup> “**visitors and residents of Jerusalem alike**,”<sup>LIVING</sup> and “**My Jewish**

*The events of the day are too significant for their meaning to be deciphered by anyone uninspired. by Given O. Blakely*

*brothers and all of you who are staying in Jerusalem.*<sup>1E</sup>

The word “*Judaea*” comes from the Greek word *Ἰουδαῖοι* (je-hu-dah-ios), which means “belonging to the Jewish race, Jewish as respects race, before exile, citizens of the kingdom of Judah, after exile, all Israelites, the Jews, the Jewish race,”<sup>THAYER</sup> “Jew in respect to race or religion, as opposed to non-Jew,”<sup>FRIBERG</sup> “Jewish,”<sup>UBS</sup> “the ethnic name of a person who belongs to the Jewish nation,”<sup>LOUW-NIDA</sup> Other verses containing this word translate it “*Jews*” (Acts 2:9; 14:5; 21:21; Rom 1:16; Gal 2:13).

Here Peter uses the word to accent the superiority of their Jewish nation over the foreign nations in which they were residing. It is as though he was saying, “Although you are residing in many different nations, you are, in reality, primarily members of the Jewish race.” This same kind of reasoning is found in the terms “Spanish-American,” “African-American,” etc.

Peter, then, speaks to all of the Jews, whether naturally born or proselytes – those who were from other countries, and those who made their home in Jerusalem and the surrounding area.

**BE THIS KNOWN UNTO YOU**

“... be this known unto you ...”

Other versions read, “Let this be known to you,”<sup>NKJV</sup> “let me explain this to you,”<sup>NIV</sup> “take note of this,”<sup>BBE</sup> “Listen carefully, all of you,”<sup>NLT</sup> “Listen, all of you,”<sup>LIVING</sup> “Listen to me. I will tell you something you need to know,”<sup>1E</sup> “be in no uncertainty about this matter,”<sup>WEYMOUTH</sup> “You must understand something,”<sup>ISV</sup> “have no doubt about this matter,”<sup>MONTGOMERY</sup> “let this be [explained] to you so that you will know and understand,”<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup> and “listen carefully to what I say.”<sup>PHILLIPS</sup>

This is not an occasion for entertainment, or presenting some curious and intriguing insights. This was a time of revelation, when needful things would be made known. **The knowledge that will be disseminated will have to do with “the wonderful works of God” as wrought out in and through Jesus Christ.** Peter will not expound the Law. There were men present who could do that. He will not deliver an oration about how

men ought to live under the Roman yoke, or exhort the people to free themselves from it. He will not rehearse something that was already known among the people. This will be a time of fresh and invigorating knowledge – knowledge that is intended to be embraced by the listeners.

**HEARKEN TO MY WORDS**

“... and hearken to my words.”

Other versions read, “heed my words,”<sup>NKJV</sup> “give heed to my words,”<sup>NASB</sup> “listen carefully to what I say,”<sup>NIV</sup> “give ear to my words,”<sup>RSV</sup> “with your ears receive my words,”<sup>DOUAY</sup> “listen to my words,”<sup>NAB</sup> “Make no mistake about this,”<sup>NLT</sup> “hearken to my sayings,”<sup>YLT</sup> “Listen carefully,”<sup>1E</sup> “pay attention to what I say,”<sup>WEYMOUTH</sup> “pay close attention to my words,”<sup>WILLIAMS</sup> “listen closely to what I have to say,”<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup> and “while I explain to you what has happened.”<sup>PHILLIPS</sup>

Here Peter calls upon the people to fasten their attention on what he is saying with a mind not to miss anything he says. **They were to marshal all of their powers of concentration, and gather together all of their attention.** Let no distraction take hold of them. Let them not be drawn aside to other sights and sounds. Gird up the loins of your mind! Shut out inferior and troubling thoughts! Words will now be said that must be comprehended, and that circumstance required the undivided attention of the people.

We have lived to see a new kind generation rise – at least new in this part of the world. Actually, it is a generation that can be traced back to heathen cultures. This kind of generation is referred to as “hedonistic.” Hedonism is the doctrine that “pleasure or happiness is the sole and chief good in life.”<sup>MERRIAM-WEBSTER</sup> This doctrine was taught by the Epicureans and Cyrenaics. Paul encountered some of these people in Athens (Acts 17:18).

This approach to life was also adopted by the Nicolaites, who are mentioned twice in the letters to the seven churches in Asia. To the angel of the church at Ephesus John was told to write, “But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, **which I also hate**” (Rev 2:6). To the church at Pergamos he wrote, “So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of

the Nicolaitanes, **which thing I hate**” (Rev 2:15). While much of the details of their teachings is not known, its general thrust is acknowledged to allow for extensive promiscuity, covetousness and fleshly gratification.<sup>IRENAEUS, Adv. Haeres. 1,26</sup>

**This, of course, is precisely the approach to life taken by the Epicureans: self is all important, and the gratification of the flesh is primary.**

**EPICUREAN PHILOSOPHY**

There is no constraint, no obligation to rectitude; there is no moral compulsion; there is no domain for conscience; there can only be a more or less judicious and provident adaptation of actions to the judgments or dispositions of men, and to the supposed satisfaction of the individual. Morality without religion is a pretense and a delusion. A tranquil and pleasurable existence becomes the *summum bonum* of the sage; the gratification of every passion as it arises the sole duty of an eager and undisciplined nature. Every restraint is removed except such as may be voluntarily imposed; and though cool, impassive, and indolent dispositions may maintain an external propriety of demeanor when exposed to no temptation, there can be no guarantee for rectitude of conduct, and the license of all passions will be gratified by the unclean beasts who wallow in the Epicurean style.<sup>McCLINTOK and STRONG</sup>

This kind of approach to life has now crept more fully into the church, even though Jesus twice affirmed His hatred of it. This is the mother of all church division – someone is seeking their own desire. It is at the root of the present controversy over music in the church. It is the origin of watered down preaching, adopting worldly philosophies, and striving to appeal to the natural inclinations of the people.

**What Does This Have to Do with the Text?**

While this may very well appear to be a pointless diversion, it does have much to do with our text. When Peter shouts out, “be this known unto you, and hearken to my words,” **he is calling them to consider something greater than themselves.** This is a summons to consider something that is wholly separate from fleshly interests, the care of the body, and earthly appetites. He will not speak of the gratification of personal desires – although what He says, if duly heeded, will produce a deep satisfaction. This will not be a “how-to” seminar, or a lecture on how to achieve success in life, and find real satisfaction

in the flesh, obtaining all manner of worldly objectives. **That kind of approach belongs to the Epicureans and the Nicolaitanes.**

Admittedly, this is in sharp conflict with the modern approach to Christianity with its youth movements, senior citizen retreats, and the likes. It is

not that such things are of themselves wrong. **They are not in concert with the manner of Divine appeals and emphases.** This will become exceedingly apparent.

**IT IS NOT WHAT SOME OF YOU THINK**

<sup>15</sup> **For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.**

Being led by the Spirit, Peter is not content for the events of the day to be misunderstood. An “*imagination*” concerning what is occurring has been

had one spec of truth in it. **He gives them no right to utter such an absurdity – free speech or not.** Whatever one may think about freedom and liberty, men are never free enough to speak a lie, or cast reproach upon the truth. Salvation is not declared in an arena of free thought and unfettered opinion.

about spiritual matters (Rom 14:1-6). However, the whole point of that text is NOT the continuance of varying views, but refusing to condemn those who see such things differently (14:10-13). The variant views are to be maintained in a conscientious effort to please the Lord (14:7-9). **Further, the postulate is that as each person lives unto the Lord, their views will be brought into synch with the truth itself** (14:17-19). This is what Paul meant in his statement to the Philippians: “*Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you*” (Phil 3:15). The point is that different views may, indeed, be entertained. **However that condition must not continue, and there is nothing about salvatration that allows for their continuance.**

**Peter does not allow for the remotest possibility that what they said had one spec of truth in it. He gives them no right to utter such an absurdity – free speech or not. Whatever one may think about freedom and liberty, men are never free enough to speak a lie, or cast reproach upon the truth.**

voiced, and now, being filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter will cast it down.

**THESE ARE NOT DRUNKEN AS YE SUPPOSE**

“*For these are not drunken, as ye suppose . . .*” Other versions read, “*For these men are not overcome with wine, as it seems to you.*”<sup>BBE</sup> “*for these are not full of wine, as \*ye\* suppose,*”<sup>DARBY</sup> “*For these are not intoxicated, as ye suppose,”<sup>M RD</sup> “*Some of you are saying these people are drunk. It isn't true!”<sup>NLT</sup> “*These men are not drunk as you think.*”<sup>IE</sup> “*This is not intoxication as you suppose,*”<sup>WEYMOUTH</sup> and “*For these men are not drunk, as you imagine.*”<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>**

Peter does not descend into the arena of speculation or opinion. He does not say, “There is another way of looking at these things,” or “That is just your opinion.” Some among them had declared, “*These men are full of new wine*” (2:13). Peter does not allow for the remotest possibility that what they said

When men begin to allow for differing views of the truth, they move further away from it. This has become such a common practice that professing Christians often think nothing of men maintaining views of Scripture that are actually in conflict with one another. They imagine that men are free to do this, and that God thinks nothing of it. All of this is embraced in spite of the fact that the Spirit has said, “*That ye may with ONE MIND and ONE MOUTH glory God*” (Rom 15:6), “*be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Cor 1:10), “*be of one mind.*” (2 Cor 13:11), “*with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel*” (Phil 1:27), “*be of one accord, be of one mind” (1 Pet 3:8), and “*arm yourselves likewise with the same mind” (1 Pet 4:11).***

Some sophist will say, “What about Romans 14?” That text appears to justify the maintenance of differing views

Thus, from the very outset, Peter will throw down erroneous thoughts, for they really have no place with the truth of God. Before he explains what HAS happened, he will clearly define what has NOT happened.

**IT IS BUT THE THIRD HOUR OF THE DAY**

“*. . . seeing it is but the third hour of the day.*” Other versions read, “*It is only the third hour of the day.”<sup>NKJV</sup> “*It's only nine in the morning.”<sup>NIV</sup> “*it is only nine o'clock in the morning.”<sup>NRSV</sup> “*t's much too early for that. People don't get drunk by nine o'clock in the morning.*”<sup>NLT</sup> “*for it is [only] the third hour (about 9:00 a.m.) of the day,*”<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup> and “*is after all only nine o'clock in the morning of this great feast day.”<sup>PHILLIPS</sup>****

The charge that had been leveled at the speakers was foolish, and wholly without any basis at all. That, of course, is how the flesh is, leaping to ignorant conclusions so that it justifies ignoring what is being said. But Peter will not let

*The events of the day are too significant for their meaning to be deciphered by anyone uninspired. by Given O. Blakely*

the speakers go so easily. **He will point out the absurdity of what they have said.** He does not assume their sincerity, for sincerity does not move one to leap to foolish conclusions. Sincerity moves one to consideration, examination, and the pursuit of the truth. Where these traits are not found, sincerity is not present – at least, not in the matter at hand. That is, they may very well have been sincere about keeping the Passover and Pentecost, **but they were not sincere in their response to the miracle that had confronted them.**

The “*third hour of the day*” was nine o’clock in the morning. This gives us some idea about when the events of the day started. Ponder what had already taken place.

⇨ They were all together with one

accord in one place (2:1).

⇨ A sound came from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and filled all the house where they were sitting (2:2).

⇨ There appeared cloven tongues like fire, sitting upon each of the disciples (2:3).

⇨ They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit gave them utterance (2:4).

⇨ What was happening was “*noised abroad*” (2:6a).

⇨ A multitude came together and were confounded because they heard the disciples speaking in their native

tongues (2:6b).

⇨ The multitude were amazed, and began speaking to one another, observing that they were hearing of “*the wonderful works of God*” (2:7).

⇨ The multitude were all amazed, and wondered what all of this could mean (2:12).

⇨ Some mocked, saying that the disciples were “*full of new wine*” (2:13).

I cannot conceive of such remarkable things happening within a few minutes. However one chooses to look at this, it appears clear that the events of the day commenced rather early – quite unlike gatherings during our time. One senses a feeling of expectancy.

## THIS IS WHAT JOEL PROPHESED

“<sup>16</sup> ***But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.***”

We will now see that valid spiritual happenings will correlate with Scripture. This is because “*the Lord GOD will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets*” (Amos 3:7). Of old time, God told His people to test what was put before them by Scripture. “*And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them*” (Isa 8:19-20).

There are self-proclaimed prophets in our day who declare new things are happening. These include such things as being “slain in the Spirit,” falling out under the power,” “laughing in the Spirit,” and people expressing animal-like sounds. However, they are not speaking according to God’s word. No prophet foretold such occurrences, and the church is built upon the foundation of “*the apostles and prophets*” (Eph 2:20) –

not contemporary prophets, but those who “*prophesied of the grace that should come unto you*” (1 Pet 1:10). These were the prophets who “*testified beforehand*

LIVING “*This is the thing,*”<sup>IE</sup> “*But [instead] this is [the beginning of] what,*”<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup> and “*No, this something which was predicted.*”<sup>PHILLIPS</sup>

**Peter immediately takes them to the Scriptures – their Scriptures. He will explain what was happening by showing God had foretold through the prophets what the people were now witnessing. That is how he will account for legitimate spiritual experience.**

*the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow*” (1 Pet 1:11).

Now, let us behold how Peter speaks, and how he explains the events of the day.

### THIS IS THAT

“*But this is that . . .*” Other versions read, “*But this is what,*”<sup>NKJV</sup> “*No, this is what,*”<sup>NIV</sup> “*On the contrary, this is what,*”<sup>CSB</sup> “*What you see this morning was predicted centuries ago,*”

Peter immediately takes them to the Scriptures – their Scriptures. He will explain what was happening by showing God had foretold through the prophets what the people were now witnessing. **That is how he will account for legitimate spiritual experience.**

This is not the manner in which explanations are being provided today. For example, those who are telling us that God is dramatically working through a new praise movement have not

shown us any prophecy of such a thing. Those who are saying that a great revival will break out among the youth have not correlated it with Scripture. The people who are testifying of a latter day outbreak of healing are not buttressing their words with the prophets.

I understand that this may appear too critical and too demanding. However, in this text we are being exposed to a very real Divine beginning, and therefore it sets the stage for proper thought and proclamation as well. We must discipline our minds to remember that Peter is speaking just as the others had been speaking – as one *“filled with the Holy Spirit”*

**SPOKEN BY THE PROPHET JOEL**

*“ . . . which was spoken by the prophet Joel.”* Other versions read,

*“spoken of through the prophet Joel,”*<sup>NASB</sup>  
*“uttered through the prophet Joel,”*<sup>ESV</sup>  
*“this is what the prophet was saying,”*<sup>NJB</sup>  
*“predicted long ago by the prophet Joel,”*<sup>NLT</sup>  
 and *“said through the prophet Joel.”*<sup>IE</sup>

So far as the record is concerned, Jesus had not made a point of Joel’s prophecy to the disciples. Now, however, the Holy Spirit will make this association. He will *“guide them into all truth”* (John 16:13) – and God’s WORD *“is truth”* (John 17:17).

Peter does not speak as a robot, or as one who is in a trance and knows not what he is saying. Peter knows who he is addressing – Jews from afar, and those who were dwelling in Jerusalem as well. He speaks as one who has heard the charges the listeners have made, being fully aware of their words. He speaks as

one who is fully aware of the time – *“the third hour of the day.”* He has all of his powers of reason, knowing that drunkenness does not happen at that time of the day.

Now, in a display of spiritual aptitude, that can only be given by the Holy Spirit, he correlates what is happening with something that Joel said at least 600 years before, and possibly nearly 900 years prior to this particular day of Pentecost. What Peter now says are words *“taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words”*<sup>NASB</sup> (1 Cor 2:13). These words are suitable containers for carrying the news of salvation. They are words confirming that God always speaks and acts with His purpose in mind, and in accord with the holy prophets, to whom He revealed these things.

**THE SPIRIT Poured OUT UPON ALL FLESH**

*“<sup>17a</sup> And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh . . . ”*

Joel appears to be one of the earlier prophets, although the precise time of his labors are uncertain. There are a number of allusions to his prophecies by other prophets.

- ⇨ *“Roar from Zion”* (Amos 1:2 compared to Joel 3:16).
- ⇨ *“Mountains drop sweet wine”* (Amos 9:13 compared to Joel 3:18).
- ⇨ The Lord *“repenting”* of evil (Amos 7:3 compared to Joel 2:13).
- ⇨ Devouring the deep and eating up part (Amos 7:4 compared with Joel 1:20).
- ⇨ Heavenly bodies darkened (Isaiah 13:10 compared with Joel 2:10,31).
- ⇨ Shaking heaven and earth (Isaiah 13:13 compared with Joel 3:15,16).
- ⇨ Faces burning with shame and reproach (Isaiah 13:8 compared with Joel 2:6).

- ⇨ Casting lots for the people (Obadiah 1:11 compared with Joel 3:3).
- ⇨ Violence against Jacob (Obadiah 1:10 compared to Joel 3:19).
- ⇨ The nearness of the chastening day of God (Obadiah 1:15 compared with Joel 1:15).
- ⇨ Signs, wonders, and deliverance (Zechariah 12:2,9; 14:1, 5-11 compared with Joel 2:30-32)

If Joel prophesied before Isaiah, that would put him prior to 760 B.C. Amos, who appears to allude to Joel’s prophesy, lived and prophesied around 760 B.C. Zechariah prophesied around 750 B.C. Obadiah prophesied around 550 B.C. Based upon these generalities, the particular prophecy to which Peter refers was given somewhere between 800 and 600 years prior to this day of Pentecost.

**For modern religious men, contemporary circumstances and needs are the emphasis of the hour.** Men cry out for relevancy, and for things that will assist them in living happy and successful lives. However, there is a total

**THE PROPHECY OF JOEL  
 JOEL 2:28-32**

*“<sup>28</sup> And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: <sup>29</sup> And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. <sup>30</sup> And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. <sup>31</sup> The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. <sup>32</sup> And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.”*

absence of this sort of thing in our text. No one would have imagined that Jerusalem needed what is now going to be announced. **The people drawn to behold what was taking place saw nothing pertinent in it – it only produced consternation in them.** However, this was something that God was doing –

*The events of the day are too significant for their meaning to be deciphered by anyone uninspired. by Given O. Blakely*

something of which He had spoken centuries earlier. **Nothing can possibly be more relevant in a world created by God than what He Himself is doing.**

Since the people could not possibly have made a correlation between what they were seeing and what the prophets declared, Peter will show it to them. He will show them that their own Scriptures had spoken of this day, yet they knew it not.

**IT SHALL COME TO PASS**

*“And it shall come to pass . . .”*

Other versions read, *“and it shall be,”* NASB *“it will be,”* NRSV *“it will come about,”* BBE and *“It will occur.”* WILLIAMS

There is a certitude in the Word of God that is refreshing to those who are living by faith and being saved by hope. **Faith cannot survive on a message or possibilities or probabilities. Hope will wither and die if all it has is the thought of something that might be.** It is not wrong to consider the possibilities, but it must only be done **after** the consideration of certainties.

The prophets (Isaiah through Malachi) used this phrase – *“it shall come to pass”* – seventy-eight times. The words affirm an *“eternal purpose”* that cannot possibly be negated or altered. God affirms, *“My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure”* (Isa 46:10). Again He shouts to the world, *“I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it”* (Isa 46:11). And again He says, *“I work, and who will reverse it?”* NKJV (Isa 43:13). David affirmed, *“The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of His heart to all generations”* (Psa 33:11). Again David wrote, *“Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did He in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places”* (Psa 135:6).

If these statements were not absolute truth, Peter could never have said *“This is that which was prophesied by the prophet Joel; and it shall come to pass!”* Satan could not stop it. His principalities and powers could not deter it. The chief priests and rulers of the Jews could not cause it to be delayed. Pilate and Herod were powerless to

hinder it in any way. **The inauguration of the New Covenant took place on the appointed day, and at the appointed hour, and without any modification from the original intention, announced centuries before by Joel.**

Now Peter begins his explanation of the events.

**IN THE LAST DAYS**

*“ . . . in the last days saith God . . .”* Other versions read, *“in the last days says God,”* NASB *“in the last days . . . God declares,”* NRSV and *“in the last days – the Lord declares.”* NJB

Here Peter is caught up in the spirit of the prophets, giving the sense of the text. Joel does not use the expression *“last days,”* but relates his prophecy to certain workings of the Lord with Israel. He uses the phrase, *“And it shall come to pass afterward”* (Joel 2:28). Peter here employs the words of Isaiah, who said, *“And it shall come to pass in the last days . . .”* (Isa 2:2). Micah used the same phrase, denoting, as did Isaiah, the times of the Messiah (Micah 4:1). This is the last major division of time.

There is a sense in which the phrase *“last days”* pertains to the closing period of *“the day of salvation.”* Thus Paul, warning of a coming apostasy, writes around thirty years after Pentecost, *“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come”* (2 Tim 3:1). Peter does the same thing: *“Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts”* (2 Pet 3:3).

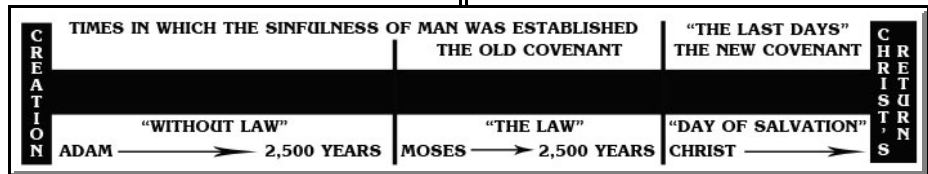
Yet, in our text, the phrase is used to describe the entire *“day of salvation,”* or period of the New Covenant – particularly of the initiation of that era.

*spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds”* (Heb 1:1-2).

From the perspective of our text, the closing period of time is viewed as the most productive one enlightened of all eras. In other words, the latter period of this world will be the time of the greatest revelation and opportunity. As when the water was turned into wine, God has *“kept the good”* for the last segment of human history (John 2:10). Such marvelous realities as justification (Rom 4:25; 5:18), eternal life (John 17:2-3), fellowship with Christ (1 Cor 1:9), and the *“communion of the Holy Spirit”* (2 Cor 13:10) are all being realized in *“the last days.”*

This means that, in the fullest sense of the word, *“the last days”* are not reserved for the *“antichrist”* (1 John 2:18), the *“man of sin”* (2 Thess 2:3), *“the beast”* (Rev 13:11-18; 19:19), and *“the false prophet”* (Rev 16:13; 19:20). These blotches on human history will have their day during the *“latter times”* (1 Tim 4:1), but they will not close out *“the last days.”* The *“last days”* will be brought to an end when the Lord appears in all of His glory. At that time, the seeming success of the wicked one will be brought to a grinding halt. As it is written, *“And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming”* (2 Thess 2:8).

Until the Lord returns in all of His glory, *“the day of salvation”* and *“the time accepted”* is in place (2 Cor 6:2), and *“whosoever will”* may *“take of the water of life freely”* (Rev 22:17). What we have in this text is the beginning of this period of time.



The book of Hebrews also uses the expression in this way. *“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days”*

**I WILL POUR OUT OF MY SPIRIT**  
*“ . . . I will pour out of My Spirit . . .”* Other versions read, *“I will pour forth of My Spirit,”* NASB *“I will send out My*

*Spirit,*<sup>BEBE</sup> and *"I will pour out a portion of My Spirit."*<sup>NAB</sup>

As I have pointed out previously, this is according to several prophecies, given long before this Pentecost.

- ⇒ *"For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring"*(Isa 44:3).
- ⇒ *"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions"*(Joel 2:28).
- ⇒ *"And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out My Spirit"*(Joel 2:29).
- ⇒ *"And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of*

copiousness, coming from a word that means "bestow or distribute largely, an abundant bestowal,"<sup>THAYER</sup> and "to give in abundance, cause to fully experience, generously provide."<sup>FRIBERG</sup> This speaks of a lavish shedding forth of the Holy Spirit. It is not a moving of the Spirit "at times," like Samson experienced (Judges 13:25).

This is what Jesus referred to as being "baptized with the Spirit" (Acts 1:5). It was being "endued with power from on high" (Lk 24:49). It was the experience to which Jesus referred when He said, "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you"<sup>NKJV</sup> (Acts 1:8). It was "the promise of the Father," for which the disciples had been waiting (Acts 1:4).

Notice that this is a baptism that was accomplished by pouring. Some find it difficult to reconcile the meaning of baptize (immerse or plunge into), with pouring. However, when you consider a lavish and abundant pouring, it is at once perceived that the recipients of this

away and the devil destroyed (Heb 9:26; 2:14), and the resurrection of Christ through which He was "declared to be the Son of God with power" (Rom 1:4).

**UPON ALL FLESH**

"... upon all flesh..." Other versions read, "upon all mankind,"<sup>NASB</sup> "on all people,"<sup>NIV</sup> "on all humanity,"<sup>CSB</sup> and "on everyone."<sup>GWN</sup>

It is important that we comprehend the prophecy Peter affirms is being fulfilled. It is not a prophesy about twelve men, or even one hundred and twenty disciples. What we have here is the beginning of something that involves all humanity. In fact, in speaking of all believers, Paul refers to the Spirit in the same manner. "... according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior" (Titus 3:5-6). It cannot be mere coincidence that the language is so similar.

I know of no prophecies of salvation, a Savior, the New Covenant, or anything pertaining to them that is regional, provincial, or only for a group of people with fleshly distinctions. No number of grammar studies, verb tenses, word antecedents, and the likes, can neutralize what Peter is saying. His inspired interpretation of the events is based upon Joel's prophesy – a prophesy that involves "all flesh," "all mankind,"<sup>NASB</sup> "all humanity,"<sup>CSB</sup> and "everyone."<sup>GWN</sup>

I hardly see how Peter could have made the matter any clearer – and yet he does elaborate, confirming that what Joel prophesied was, in fact, happening at that time.

**It is important that we comprehend the prophecy Peter affirms is being fulfilled. It is not a prophesy about twelve men, or even one hundred and twenty disciples. What we have here is the beginning of something that involves all humanity.**

*supplications:* and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn" (Zec 12:10).

The words "pour out" speak of

pouring were, indeed, immersed in the Spirit by this heavenly deluge.

The determining factor in this pouring forth of the Spirit was not the people receiving the Spirit, but the One administering the pouring forth. The basis for this marvelous act was death of Christ, through which sin was taken

**SONS AND DAUGHTERS WILL PROPHECY**

<sup>17b</sup> "... and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy..."

Joel speaks with precision, leaving no doubt about what would take place "in the last days." Also, in referring

to Joel's prophesy, Peter will leave no doubt about what was actually happening before the eyes and ears of the people. What Joel had foretold was taking place in Jerusalem, in the house where the disciples were gathered on the

day of Pentecost. If this is not true, then Peter would be speaking words into the air, and adding further confusion to the moment.

**SONS AND DAUGHTERS**

*The events of the day are too significant for their meaning to be deciphered by anyone uninspired. by Given O. Blakely*

“. . . and your sons and your daughters . . .” Every version reads the same. **No translator had any doubt about how the text reads.** In this case, “*all flesh*,” or “*everyone*,” does not mean every single person, but representatives from every class. The pouring forth of the Spirit as prophesied by Joel, would be indiscriminating as regards gender: “*sons and daughters*.” **This blessing would not be realized only by the sons, to the exclusion of the daughters.** Is it possible for Joel to say it with any more clarity?

Some have great difficulty with this text, even though it is something revealed to Joel, and to Peter as well. Such people have no trouble understanding that when God sends the rain “*on the just and on the unjust*,” both classes receive the rain and enjoy the benefits of it (Matt 5:45). Yet, when the Lord reveals that one of the marks of “*the last days*” (not “day”) is that He will pour out His Spirit on “*all flesh*,” and that this includes “*your sons and daughters*,” these same people stand back aghast, as though this introduces some kind of theological difficulty. Is it not more likely that the difficulty is caused by their understanding? Who would dare to say that Christ would direct His church to function in contradiction of the revealed nature of this “*day of salvation*.”

**PROPHESYING**

“. . . shall prophesy . . .” Other versions read, “*will be prophets*,”<sup>BBE</sup> “*will prophesy*,”<sup>CSB</sup> “*will speak what God has revealed*,”<sup>GWN</sup> and “*prophesy [telling forth the divine counsels]*.”<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

The evidence of the pouring forth of the Holy Spirit will not be some euphoric feeling, or some strange physical and unintelligent bodily reaction. The “*sons*” and “*daughters shall prophesy*.” The word from which “*prophesy*” is translated means “to speak forth by Divine inspiration, to predict . . . to utter forth, declare a thing which can only be known by Divine revelation . . . to teach, refute, reprove, admonish, comfort others,”<sup>THAYER</sup> “generally, of speaking with the help of divine inspiration proclaim what God wants to make known, preach, expound,”<sup>FRIEBERG</sup> “proclaim God’s message, preach; prophesy, predict; speak God’s message intelligibly,”<sup>UBS</sup> “proclaim God’s message, preach; prophesy, predict; speak God’s message intelligibly,”<sup>LOUW-NIDA</sup> “to expound scripture, to speak and preach under the influence of the Holy Spirit,”

LIDDELL-SCOTT and “proclaim or interpret a divine revelation.”<sup>GINGRICH</sup>

This particular word is the subject of some significant Pauline doctrine and exposition. **He makes clear that this is a word relating to public declarations and mixed audiences.** Some brief observations are in order, for Paul also speaks with regards to the nature of the days of the New Covenant.

- ⇨ After affirming that “*the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God*,” Paul affirms that both men and women are to prophesy with a mind to honoring their head (1 Cor 11:3-5).
- ⇨ **All** believers are urged to desire spiritual gifts, especially to be able to

The persons who would take upon themselves to exclude the women from these texts have a gargantuan task before them. **They must contradict Joel, Peter, and Paul, to espouse their view.**

In addition to the doctrinal implications of any such contradicting position, we have the very events of our text to consider. Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, affirms that Joel’s prophesy is being fulfilled at that present time: “*this is that!*” **Unless his words were empty and filled with air, what Joel had prophesied was actually taking place at that time: sons and daughters were prophesying.** If that was not taking place, then in what sense was Joel’s prophesy being fulfilled? And why did Peter refer to something as being presently exhibited if it was not taking place at all? How would this have set with those “*devout*

**No amount of reasoning can sanctify such a view or justify its propagation. After all of the explanations have been given, we must still confront the “sons” and “daughters” of our text.**

- prophesy (1 Cor 14:1).
- ⇨ The person who prophesies “*speaketh unto men to edification, exhortation, and comfort*” (1 Cor 14:3).
- ⇨ Paul said he would like everyone in the church to “*prophesy*” (1 Cor 14:5).
- ⇨ Paul poses a scenario of a gathering where **everyone** is prophesying, and someone who does not believe, or is unlearned in the ways of God, enters the assembly. That person is convicted by the prophesying he hears, and acknowledges the presence of God in the assembly (1 Cor 14:24-25).
- ⇨ Paul categorically states, “*ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and be comforted*” (1 Cor 14:31).
- ⇨ Paul again exhorts the whole church to “*covet to prophesy*” (1 Cor 14:39).

*men*” who were listening to him – men who had a working knowledge of the Scriptures?

**In the matter of granting spiritual insight and the ability to speak it forth, whether one is a son or a daughter will have no bearing on the experience. That is the not basis of Divine determination. For that matter salvation itself, and the world to come for which it prepares us, recognize no such distinctions** (Gal 3:28; Matt 22:50).

**ANOTHER IMPLICATION**

Also, precisely how does this fit in with the motion that **ONLY** the apostles had been “*baptized*” with the Holy Spirit? Or, was the baptism unrelated to Joel’s prophesy? What of those who say only “*the twelve*” had been speaking? How would that circumstance possibly have fulfilled Joel’s prophesy, who said not so much as a word about the Spirit being poured upon a limited class of people?

How can “*all flesh*” and “*sons*” and

“daughters” be in any sense descriptive of “the twelve?” What rules of grammar can cause Joel’s prophesy to be fulfilled in a unique and isolated gathering of “the twelve,” with them alone receiving “the promise of the Father,” and them alone

speaking “the wonderful works of God?” **The whole idea that such a thing is possible is nothing more than a foolish tradition, and is to be rejected as spurious, injurious, and contradictory of the very nature of the day of salvation.**

No amount of reasoning can sanctify such a view, or justify its acceptance and propagation. After all of the explanations have been given, we must still confront the “sons” and “daughters” of our text.

## YOUNG AND OLD WILL HAVE INSIGHT

<sup>17c</sup> . . . and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.”

Not only is “the day of salvation” marked by a lack of distinction on the basis of gender, it is also without discrimination as regards age.

### YOUNG MEN SHALL SEE VISIONS

“ . . . and your young men shall see visions . . . ” Other versions read, “your young people shall see visions,”<sup>NJB</sup> “your young men will have visions,”<sup>WILLIAMS</sup> and “your young men shall see visions (divinely granted appearances).”<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

The word from which “young men” is translated is νεανίσκοι (neh-an-is-koī). Lexically it means, “youth,”<sup>THAYER</sup> and

visions include Abraham (Gen 15:1), Ezekiel (Ezek 8:4), Daniel (Dan 7:2; 8:1), Obadiah (Obad 1:1), and Habakkuk (Hab 2:2). The witness of the transfiguration of Jesus, with Moses and Elijah speaking with Him is referred to as a “vision” (Matt 17:9). When Gabriel the angel appeared to Zacharias, announcing the birth of John the Baptist, it was called a “vision” (Lk 1:22).

During the time of Moses, God said He would speak to prophets by means of a “vision,” even though it was inferior to the way in which He spoke to Moses (Num 12:6-8). There were also lengthy periods of time when no vision at all was given to the people – such as the time when young Samuel came on the scene (1 Sam 3:1). So far as the Scriptural record is concerned, visions

“God” that were being declared were a rehearsal of these visions.

### OLD MEN SHALL DREAM DREAMS

“ . . . and your old men shall dream dreams.” Other versions read, “your elders will dream dreams,”<sup>DARBY</sup> “your old people will dream dreams,”<sup>NJB</sup> “your old men will have special dreams,”<sup>IE</sup> and “your old men shall dream [divinely suggested] dreams.”<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

Although an inferior form of revelation (Jer 23:28), God has spoken to men in dreams. Men who had dreams include Ahimelech (Gen 20:3), Jacob (Gen 28:12), Laban (Gen 31:24), Joseph (Gen 37:5,9), Solomon (1 Kgs 3:5), Dan 7:1, and Joseph, Mary’s husband (Matt 1:20; 2:13,19,22). With the possible exception of Daniel, none of these individuals were “old men.” However, Peter affirmed that, in strict accord with Joel’s prophecy, when God poured forth His Spirit upon “all flesh,” even the “old men” would dream dreams. This too must have been fulfilled to some extent on the day of Pentecost, as old men were able to have dreams relating to life in Christ Jesus. Because dreams are ordinarily during the night hours, the events of the day of Pentecost would have involved the speaking forth of dreams in which the “wonderful works of God” had been revealed.

**The idea here is that God will not divulge His will to people, and employ them in His service, with regard for their age.** Even in the granting of visions and dreams, being young or old will not be a determining factor.

### THE INSTITUTIONAL CURSE

Although the New Covenant

**The heavenly bodies are presently a picture of absolute precision and stability. Years, seasons, months, days, hours, minutes, and seconds are determined by them. This is so true that some have ascribed Divine traits to them, even trusting them for assessing the present, and predicting the future.**

“a young man beyond the age of puberty, but before marriage.”<sup>LOUW-NIDA</sup> From the standpoint of the flesh, “young men” are immature, and have not had sufficient experience.

A “vision” is a phenomenon where the individual is given to see things inaccessible to the natural senses. It is as though the curtain of obscuring nature is pulled aside and the individual is given glimpses of hidden things. Men who had

were exceedingly rare for the first 4,000 years of human history.

However, when the Lord poured forth His Spirit “upon all flesh,” even young men would “see visions.” Because Peter declared this was being fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, some young men had no doubt received visions relating to God’s “wonderful works.” It is doubtless true that some of the “wonderful works of

functions without regard for age, sending forth benefits to both young and old, this is not the manner of institutions associated with *“the church.”*

A young man or woman, even though the Spirit of God is upon them and they have the *“gift of prophecy,”* are often classed with the children, or the *“unlearned and ignorant.”* Even though they may have an acute understanding of the things of God, and have a profitable understanding of things unseen, they are placed in subordination to those who are wholly lacking of such understanding, yet are considered to be elders or leaders in the household of faith.

The notion of the modern church concerning *“old men”* also clashes with

**Let it be clear that such circumstances are in no way related to what God is doing. Where these attitudes prevail God cannot possibly be working for good, for that is not His manner.**

that of our text. Such are frequently “put out to pasture” as though they are worthless, even though God may give them *“dreams,”* and they be gifted to expound the things of God with great discernment and profit. “Legion” is the name of such men who, at the height of their fellowship with God are placed on the institutional shelf, and given menial tasks to perform that require neither

insight nor spiritual understanding. **Let it be clear that such circumstances are in no way related to what God is doing.** Where these attitudes prevail God cannot possibly be working for good, for that is not His manner.

The day of Pentecost was an occasion when the real ways of God were proclaimed.

## SERVANTS AND HANDMAIDENS WILL PROPHECY

***“<sup>18</sup> And on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit; and they shall prophesy.”***

As though it was not enough to mention the sons and daughters of the people themselves, the Lord now speaks of the same people from the standpoint of their relationship to Him.

### ON MY SERVANTS AND MY HANDMAIDENS

*“And on My servants and on My handmaidens . . .”* Other versions read, *“My bondslaves, both men and women,”* <sup>NASB</sup> *“My servants, both men and women,”* <sup>NIV</sup> *“My slaves, both men and women,”* <sup>NRSV</sup> *“My men-servants and My women-servants,”* <sup>BBE</sup> *“upon My bondmen and My bondwomen,”* <sup>DARBY</sup> *“My male servants and on My female servants,”* <sup>ESV</sup> and *“all my servants, men and women alike.”* <sup>LIVING</sup>

God is very specific on this point. He is not speaking of the servants and handmaidens of people – slaves who served them. Abraham had *“trained servants”* (Gen 14:14), and an older, or senior, servant as well (Gen 24:2). Isaac had servants who dug a well for him (Gen 26:19). The Jews had servants, and were

instructed to treat them properly (Ex 21:20). There were also *“hired servants”* (Lev 25:40). King Saul had servants (1 Sam 16:15). King David had servants (2 Sam 2:30). Elisha had a servant (2 Kgs 5:20). Paul gave special instruction to this kind of *“servants”* (Eph 6:5-6; 1 Tim 6:1). Peter did the same, instructing the slaves (1 Pet 2:16).

Sarah had a handmaid named Hagar (Gen 16:1). Rachel had a handmaid named Bilhah (Gen 35:25). Leah had a handmaid named Zilpah (Gen 35:26).

**But these are not the kind of servants of which this text speaks.** God is speaking of HIS servants and HIS handmaidens, not those of men! God referred to *“My servant Abraham”* (Gen 26:24), *“My servant Moses”* (Num 12:7), *“My servant Caleb”* (Num 14:24), *“My servant David”* (2 Sam 3:18), and *“My servant Job”* (Job 1:8).

Hannah referred to herself as the **Lord’s “handmaid”** (1 Sam 1:11). Mary, the mother of the Lord, also referred to herself as *“the handmaid of the Lord”* (Lk 1:38). These are the servants of whom the Lord is speaking – both men and women. God Himself affirms this is true.

Joel leaves no question about this. Peter confirms this is the case, and cites the events taking place as incontrovertible proof of the matter.

### IN THOSE DAYS I WILL POUR OUT OF MY SPIRIT

*“. . . I will pour out in those days of my Spirit . . .”* Other versions read, *“I will pour out My Spirit in those days,”* <sup>NKJV</sup> *“I will in those days pour forth my Spirit,”* <sup>NASB</sup> *“I will send my Spirit,”* <sup>BBE</sup> *“I will even pour out my Spirit . . . in those days,”* <sup>CSB</sup> *“I will pour out a portion of My Spirit in those days,”* <sup>NAB</sup> and *“the Holy Spirit shall come.”* <sup>LIVING</sup>

Again, Joel draws attention to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon both men and women. This time, instead of saying *“last days,”* he refers to *“Those days”* – that is, the days in which His servants and His handmaidens will be blessed. Not only will the outpouring be indiscriminating from the social point of view (*“your sons and your daughters”*), it will also be without partiality concerning His own servants, whether male or female.

This is how the Lord will fulfill His will and convey His will in the days beginning at Pentecost, and described as

*The events of the day are too significant for their meaning to be deciphered by anyone uninspired. by Given O. Blakely*

being "before that great and notable day of the Lord will come." **He does not say His Spirit will be poured out upon the Apostles alone, but upon His servants and handmaidens.** That, Peter states, is what is under way that very day.

That means that God was pouring forth His Spirit upon both His servants and His handmaidens – men and women who were united with Him through Christ Jesus.

**THEY SHALL PROPHESEY**

"... and they shall prophesy."

Other versions read, "and they will be prophets,"<sup>BBE</sup> "they will speak what God has revealed,"<sup>GWN</sup> and "they shall

Peter to say was being fulfilled. Isaiah had also spoken of the Lord pouring out His Spirit: "I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring"(Isa 44:3). Men and women are not mentioned there. I suppose it would have better suited those who altogether exclude women from speaking in a mixed assembly. But that is not the prophecy God chose to use! **He rather chose the one that most precisely described the situation.** He also chose the one that put matters in perspective, declaring this to be a condition that would prevail "before the great and notable day of the Lord will come."

Is anyone willing to affirm that

the rich He hath sent empty away. He hath holpen His servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy; as He spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to His seed for ever"(Luke 1:46-55).


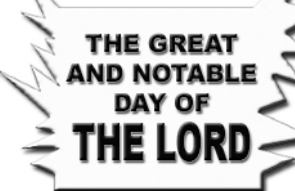
I realize this prophecy was delivered in the presence of Elizabeth. **However, so that none would imagine that it was tailored for the women alone, the Spirit moved it to be written in the Scriptures, so all of the men could read it as well!** Surely no one will charge the Spirit with breaking the rules in doing this. Is there anyone courageous enough to say the Lord acted out of character in moving Mary to speak in such an exalted manner? Or is there someone who would dare to say she spoke on her own accord and without inspiration?

This is the kind of thing Joel said would become common in "the last days." It was going to be an era in which the word of the Lord would be delivered by men and women, young and old – **and all at the discretion of the Lord.** It is He who would pour forth His Spirit upon "all flesh," without regard to age or gender! This is in anticipation of the great day.

To confirm that this did continue after Pentecost, Philip "had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy" (Acts 21:9). The church at Corinth had women that prophesied (1 Cor 11:5).

Let me once again state that Peter preceded these words by saying, "But **this is that** which was spoken by the prophet Joel" (Acts 2:16). He had also drawn attention to the ones who were speaking: "For **these** are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day"(Acts 2:15). **He was, therefore, speaking of something that was taking place at that time, and that was characteristic of the days from then until "the great and notable day of the Lord."**

I cannot conceive of those to whom he was speaking drawing the conclusions that many self-professing Bible students have drawn. What would possibly have led them to associate this remarkably detailed prophecy with a speaking group limited to twelve men?

<p>ALL FLESH, PROPHESYING, SIGNS, SALVATION</p>  <p>EVERYTHING DURING "THE DAY OF SALVATION" -- EVERY INVOLVEMENT OF GOD WITH MEN -- IS CALCULATED TO PREPARE THE PEOPLE FOR THE GREAT AND NOTABLE DAY OF THE LORD, WHEN JESUS IS REVEALED IN ALL OF HIS GLORY. THE ENTIRE TEMPORAL ORDER WILL PASS AWAY. THEN THOSE WHO ARE PREPARED WILL BE GATHERED TO THE LORD, TO EVER BE WITH HIM.</p> <p><b>THE DAY OF SALVATION</b></p>	<p>"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</p>  <p><b>GLORY</b></p>
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prophesy [telling forth the divine counsels and <sup>k</sup>predicting future events pertaining especially to God's kingdom],"  
AMPLIFIED

Some are willing to concede that the Holy Spirit can be poured out upon men and women – as long as only the men speak. But the Holy Spirit strikes their conclusion down to the ground. He does not do it uncertainly, or with some form of theological ambiguity. He does not leave it to men to decipher what is going to happen to these men and women whom God calls His own servants and handmaidens.

"**They shall prophesy!**" That, Peter says, is what is being fulfilled before the multitudes of "devout" Jews that is standing before him. Joel's prophecy is the word the Spirit moved

God really has no "handmaidens" – handmaidens that prophesy? Should one be so foolish as to take such an argument into their mouth, what will they do with the prophecy of Mary, who was the Lord's "handmaiden."?

"My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior. For He hath regarded the low estate of His handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For He that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is His name. And his mercy is on them that fear Him from generation to generation. He hath showed strength with His arm; He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and

**WONDERS IN HEAVEN AND SIGNS UPON EARTH**

**“<sup>19</sup> And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke.”**

It is fitting that the closing era of time be characterized by climactic and unusual events. There may be some difficulty associated with the precise events now described, but there should be no question about their nature, or the association with the “*great and notable day of the Lord.*” There should also be a correlation with the words of our Lord, who also spoke of the days preceding His glorious return.

**I WILL SHOW WONDERS IN HEAVEN**

“*And I will show wonders in heaven above . . .*” Other versions read, “*I will grant wonders in the sky above,*”<sup>NASB</sup> “*And I will show portents in the heaven above,*”<sup>NRSV</sup> “*wonders will be seen in heaven,*”<sup>BBE</sup> “*I will display wonders in the heaven above,*”<sup>CSB</sup> “*I will work miracles in the sky,*”<sup>GWN</sup> “*I will perform portents in the sky above,*”<sup>NJB</sup> “*I will cause wonders in the heavens above,*”<sup>NLT</sup> “*And I will cause strange demonstrations in the heavens,*”<sup>LIVING</sup> “*I will show amazing things in the sky above,*”<sup>IE</sup> “*I will display marvels in the sky above,*”<sup>WEYMOUTH</sup> and “*I will work wonders in the sky above.*”<sup>ISV</sup>

The first thing to note is that this is something the Lord Himself will do. Joel is not prophesying of global warming, quirks of nature, or mere natural disturbances. This is something that God Himself will do – “*work,*” “*perform,*” and “*cause.*” Whatever one may think of these things, they are “*wonders*” shown, or wrought, by God Himself. They will be imposed upon nature, just as surely mortality was enjoined upon it.

**THE HEAVENS JESUS SPEAKS**

⇒ The sun darkened (Matt 24:29a; Mk 13:24a). This is something that men cannot do, nor can any natural cycle or disturbance cause it. The sun is out of the reach of man, and he has no power whatsoever to alter its

activities or existence. The same is true of the moon and the stars, not to mention other heavenly bodies.

- ⇒ There shall be signs in the sun, moon, and stars (Lk 21:25a).
- ⇒ The moon will not give its light (Matt 24:29b; Mk 13:24b).
- ⇒ The stars shall fall from heaven (Matt 24:29c; Mk 13:25a).

6:12).

- ⇒ The stars fall unto the earth (Rev 6:13).
- ⇒ The heaven departs a scroll (Rev 6:14).

The heavenly bodies are presently a picture of absolute precision and stability. Years, seasons, months, days, hours, minutes, and seconds are

**It is fitting that the closing era of time be characterized by climactic and unusual events. There may be some difficulty associated with the precise events now described, but there should be no question about their nature, or the association with the “great and notable day of the Lord.”**

- ⇒ The powers of heaven will be shaken (Matt 24:29d; Mk 13:25b; Lk 21:26b). This appears to refer to a disruption of the powers of order that are reflected in the heavens – powers ordained by God for “*signs, and for seasons, and for days and years*” (Gen 1:14). One version reads, “*the forces which control the heavens will be disordered and disturbed.*”<sup>MONTGOMERY</sup> This could also refer to the spiritual principalities and powers that reside in the “*air*” (Eph 2:2), although that does not fit well with the context.

- ⇒ The sign of the Son of Man appears in the heavens (Matt 24:30a; Mk 13:26; Lk 21:27).

**THE APOSTLES SPEAK**

- ⇒ The heavens pass away with a great noise (2 Pet 3:10).
- ⇒ The elements melt with fervent heat (2 Pet 3:10).
- ⇒ The sun becomes black (Rev 6:12).
- ⇒ The moon becomes as blood (Rev

determined by them. This is so true that some have ascribed Divine traits to them, even trusting them for assessing the present, and predicting the future. Before the great and notable day of the Lord, this misplaced confidence will be shaken to its very foundations.

**I WILL SHOW SIGNS IN THE EARTH**

“*. . . and signs in the earth beneath . . .*” Other versions read, “*signs on the earth beneath,*”<sup>NASB</sup> “*signs on the earth below,*”<sup>NIV</sup> “*and prodigies on earth,*”<sup>MRD</sup> “*and miraculous signs on the earth below,*”<sup>NET</sup> “*and tokens in the earth beneath,*”<sup>TNT</sup> and “*I will do miracles on the earth below.*”<sup>IE</sup>

Before “*the great and notable day of the Lord,*” God will confirm that the entire seen realm is temporary, and therefore unworthy of a preeminent place in our hearts. Just as surely as “*the day of salvation*” had a beginning, the present earth has an appointed end, or conclusion. Isaiah said of the earth, “*The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved*” (split open<sup>NKJV</sup>), *the earth is moved exceedingly. The earth shall*

*The events of the day are too significant for their meaning to be deciphered by anyone uninspired. by Given O. Blakely*

*reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again*" (Isa 24:19-20).

The signs "in the earth beneath" have to do with it being broken down, split open, moved exceedingly, reeling to and fro, being removed, and falling and not rising again.

**THE EARTH  
JESUS SPEAKS**

- ⇨ Famines in diverse places (Matt 24:7a). The earth will refuse to yield fruits to many different peoples, as the ground refused to yield fruit to Cain (Gen 4:12). It appears as though these will occur simultaneously.
- ⇨ Pestilences in divers places (Matt 24:7b). These are plagues or diseases, breaking out in an unusual manner, and contrary to reason. Again, this is not speaking of plagues over a lengthy period of time.
- ⇨ Earthquakes in divers places (Matt 24:7c). There have been occasions when the earth "shook and trembled," and "the foundations also of the hills were moved and were shaken, because He was wroth" – as at Sinai (Psa 18:7). Here, however, simultaneously, the earth will convulse and heave up and down in "various places."<sup>NIV</sup>
- ⇨ Great earthquakes in divers places (Lk 21:11). There will also be mega-earthquakes in different places.
- ⇨ Troubles in divers places (Mk 13:8c). This speaks of agitation, turmoil, upheaval, and disturbance in unprecedented levels.
- ⇨ Distress of nations (Lk 21:25b). Whole nations will be smitten with despair, dismay, and anguish. Their wisdom will run out, and fear will grip their hearts.
- ⇨ The sea and the waves roaring (Lk 21:25c). The sea will toss and roll as though it is beyond all control.
- ⇨ Men's hearts failing for fear of the things coming upon the earth (Lk

21:26a). It will become exceedingly apparent that man is not, nor has he ever been, in control. It is ever true that "The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein" (Psa 24:1). The dominance of fear among those who are not reconciled to God confirms that they will finally become acutely aware of this fact – even if it is too late.

**BLOOD AND FIRE AND VAPOR OF SMOKE**

"... blood, and fire and vapor of smoke." Concerning "blood and fire," all

The expression "blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke" speak of the destruction of human life (blood), the consumption of the entire natural order (fire), and the final evidence of the removal of all things that offend (vapor of smoke). Jesus referred to this closing destruction when He said, "Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken" (Luke 21:26).

**The Conclusion of the Matter**

The heavens and earth "which are now" (2 Pet 3:7) are **not** truly stable – **not** from the standpoint of Divine purpose.

**The heavens and earth "which are now" (2 Pet 3:7) are not truly stable – not from the standpoint of Divine purpose. That is, our trust cannot be placed in them. They are destined to pass away. Salvation is presented with this ultimate reality in mind. It is not a way of making the earth "a better place to live." It is not a means of securing stability, security, success, and happiness in this world.**

versions read the same – "blood and fire." Concerning "vapor of smoke," other versions read, "billows of smoke,"<sup>NIV</sup> "smoky mist,"<sup>NRSV</sup> "a cloud of smoke,"<sup>CSB</sup> "clouds of smoke,"<sup>NET</sup> "thick smoke,"<sup>IE</sup> "pillars of smoke,"<sup>WEYMOUTH</sup> and "smoking vapor."<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

Admittedly, this is a difficult passage, the details of which I am most uncertain. However, there is a general message here that speaks of the latter end of this "day of salvation." Not only will the reality of salvation itself be confirmed to those who receive it, the destruction of this present evil world will also be confirmed. Those who believe the Gospel will realize the remarkable benefits that it promises. **Those who reject the Gospel will eventually realize the absolute vanity of choosing this world over the world to come.**

The day of salvation commenced with a great outpouring of grace in this world. The conclusion of that day will be accompanied with a destructive visitation of the wrath of God upon the world itself, and the enemies of Jesus in particular.

**That is, our trust cannot be placed in them.** They are destined to pass away. Salvation is presented with this ultimate reality in mind. It is not a way of making the earth "a better place to live." It is not a means of securing stability, security, success, and happiness in this world.

**The coming of the Lord will be preceded by some awareness that the end is nigh.** Christ depicted this in the parable of the ten virgins (Matt 25:1-12). The five foolish virgins then saw their need of oil. They made a last attempt to obtain some, but it was too late. The door of opportunity was closed, with no more chance of entering in. Even so, in the last stages of time, some will call out for rocks and mountains to hide them from the wrath of the Lamb (Rev 6:16-17). **Just as surely as the Israelites were not hurt by the plagues that fell upon Egypt, so those who have put their trust in the Lord will not suffer in the day of His wrath.**

I must acknowledge this to be, in a sense, very general. For that reason it is not satisfying to the intellect. However, the power of this text is, in fact, in its

**The present heavens and earth will not conclude by a clock, but by a word. They will not simply wear out, but will be forcibly brought to an abrupt conclusion.**

generality. It is enough for us to know that the conclusion of our salvation will not be realized in *"this present evil world."* **This is not where the greatest blessings are realized.** However, even though life may be sanctified and blessed while in the body, the entire realm to which the body belongs is destined for

destruction – total destruction.

**The Universe Is Not Winding Down**

The universe is not simply winding down. While there is a sense in which deterioration is all about us, **the final disintegration of the universe will be by Divine decree – a word!** It will not

be by means of a natural process. *"Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain"* (Heb 12:26-27).

**The present heavens and earth will not conclude by a clock, but by a word. They will not simply wear out, but will be forcibly brought to an abrupt conclusion.**

**NATURE BLIGHTED**

*"<sup>20</sup> The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come."*

The most stable aspects of nature are said to be no longer dependable. I cannot supply the details of this, and freely confess that to be the case.

**THE SUN TURNED INTO DARKNESS**

*"The sun shall be turned into darkness . . ."* Other versions read, *"the sun will become dark,"*<sup>BBE</sup> *"the sun shall be changed to darkness,"*<sup>DARBY</sup> *"then sun shall turn black,"*<sup>LIVING</sup> and *"into darkness shall the sun be turned."*<sup>MONTGOMERY</sup>

This condition was foretold by the prophets. *"the sun shall be darkened in his going forth"* (Isa 13:10). *"Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed"* (Isa 24:23). *"And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord GOD, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day"* (Amos 8:9).

Jesus spoke of it as well. *"after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened"* (Matt 24:29; Mk 13:24).

John the revelator also heard language like this. *"And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun*

*became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood"* (Rev 6:12).

An **introduction** to this kind of phenomenon took place during the plagues in Egypt, when *"thick darkness"* descended upon Egypt that lasted for three days (Ex 10:21-22). A similar thing happened when Jesus died – when, from the sixth hour until the ninth hour, *"there was a darkness over all the earth"* (Lk 23:44).

But this was only a vague shadow of what is coming when the sun will no longer give its light, for there will be no further need for the universe as it now is.

**THE MOON TURNED INTO BLOOD**

*" . . . and the moon into blood . . ."* Other versions read, *"the moon will become red as blood,"*<sup>GWN</sup> *"and the moon will turn blood red,"*<sup>NLT</sup> and *"the moon will become blood."*<sup>IE</sup>

In speaking of the demise of nature, the book of the Revelation also refers to a time when *"the moon became as blood"* (Rev 6:12). That is, instead of reflecting the brightness of the sun, throwing forth light, it will be crimson dark, for there will be no light for it to reflect.

**The language, while no doubt very literal, speaks of the extinguishing of all hope.** There is a time scheduled for this world, when hope will no longer be

available to men. The door of salvation will be shut, and sinners will at last face an angry God before whom they will not be able to stand.

**BEFORE THE DAY OF THE LORD COME**

*" . . . before that great and notable day of the Lord come."* Other versions read, *"Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD,"*<sup>NKJV</sup> *"BEFORE THE GREAT AND GLORIOUS DAY OF THE LORD SHALL COME,"*<sup>NASB</sup> *"before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day,"*<sup>NRSV</sup> *"before the day of the Lord comes, the great and manifest day,"*<sup>RSV</sup> *"Before the day of the Lord come, That great and notable day,"*<sup>ASV</sup> *"before that great day of the Lord comes in glory,"*<sup>BBE</sup> *"before the great and gloriously appearing day of the Lord come,"*<sup>DARBY</sup> *"before the great and manifest day of the Lord come,"*<sup>DOUAY</sup> *"before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day,"*<sup>ESV</sup> *"before the terrifying day of the Lord comes,"*<sup>GWN</sup> *"before that great and fearful day of the Lord come,"*<sup>MRD</sup> *"before the coming of the great and splendid day of the Lord,"*<sup>NAB</sup> *"before the coming of the day of the Lord -- the great and illustrious,"*<sup>YLT</sup> *"before that awesome Day of the Lord arrives,"*<sup>LIVING</sup> *"Then the great and glorious day of the Lord will come,"*<sup>IE</sup> *"to usher in the day of the Lord – that great and illustrious day,"*<sup>WEYMOUTH</sup> *"ere the day of the Lord come, that great and terrible day,"*<sup>MONTGOMERY</sup> and *"before the obvious*

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*day of the Lord comes—that great and notable and conspicuous and renowned [day].* <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

There are those who say this is referring to the destruction of Jerusalem. **That time, however, was not a time when the Lord was made manifest.** It was not a day when His glory shown forth. Nor, indeed, was the day, in the eyes of the people, strictly associated with Christ Jesus. If that had been the case, the people would have repented. Even at that time, in the midst of a great and unparalleled judgment, a veil remained over the eyes of most of the people.

By way of contrast, the “*great and notable day of the Lord*” is one of full revelation, when God will “*show*” Christ, and He will come in all of His glory. It is true that the present day of salvation is “*notable*” in its effects through faith. However, in my judgment, that is not the

⇒ **SEEN COMING WITH POWER AND GREAT GLORY.** “*And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory*” (Mat 24:30).

⇒ **WHEN HE COMES HE WILL REWARD EVERY MAN.** “*For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his works*” (Mat 16:27).

⇒ **HE SHALL COME IN HIS OWN GLORY, THE FATHER’S GLORY, AND THE GLORY OF THE ANGELS.** “*For whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He shall come in His own glory, and in His Father’s, and of the holy angels*”

BEFORE this appointed day comes, massive disturbances and disruptions will occur in the heavens and on the earth. The duration of these things is not known, but it will apparently be of sufficient duration to convince the hardhearted that the end of all things is upon them. This will not, however, be a time when preaching will be delivered, the door of salvation opened, or repentance urged. At this time, repentance will not be possible. This is portrayed in the symbolic language of the Revelation, the details of which are not supplied.

⇒ “*And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk*” (Rev 9:20).

⇒ “*And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory*” (Rev 16:9).

⇒ “*And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds*” (Rev 16:10-11).



sense of this text. Note what is said about the return of the Lord Jesus – and only one more return is proclaimed.

⇒ **THE PUBLIC DISPLAY OF THE GLORIFIED CHRIST.** “*Which in his times He shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen*” (1 Tim 6:15-16).

⇒ **EVERY EYE SHALL SEE HIM.** “*Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen*” (Rev 1:7).

(Luke 9:26).

⇒ **PUNISHMENT OF THE WICKED AND ADMIRATION OF THE SAINTS SIMULTANEOUS.** “*Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day*” (2 Thess 1:9-10).

⇒ **EARTH AND HEAVEN FLEE FROM BEFORE HIS FACE.** “*And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them*” (Rev 20:11).

The particular things of which Peter is speaking – “*this is that*” – are the matters relating to “**BEFORE** that great and notable day of the Lord.” He is speaking of the door of faith which was opened on the day of Pentecost, and will be closed shortly before the Lord returns in all of His glory. In that final day, even though people are alive, the door of hope will no longer be opened. I do not have the faintest idea about the length of this period of time. It will be sufficient to confirm to the hearts of the wicked how foolish they were not to prepare for “*that great and notable day of the Lord.*” It will be long enough to substantiate that there is no way to obtain what is necessary to make preparations **after** the door has been shut. All of that can happen in a very brief period of time –

particularly in view of the collapse of the natural order. Even though men hurry about to find a way of being saved, like the five foolish virgins, none will be found. The understanding of this should promote great sobriety and an earnest quest for the salvation of God.

**NOT INTENDED TO CAUSE FEAR AMONG THE SAINTS**

This is not intended to cause fear among the saints of God. Although all of the particulars have not been revealed, salvation is calculated to prepare us for the end of the world. It provides a new heart that is not attached to the world, and is even repulsed by it. It takes hold of promises that relate to another world, "wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Pet

3:13), and compels those living by faith to prepare for that "world to come."

When the plagues came upon Egypt, the Israelites were protected from them. In the plagues God "put a division" between His people and the people of Egypt (Ex 8:23). When a grievous disease fell upon all the cattle of Egypt, the Lord "severed between the cattle of Israel and the cattle of Egypt" (Ex 9:4). When the plague of boils came, it came only on "the Egyptians" (Ex 9:11). When the plague of hail mingled with fire came, "there was no hail" in the land of Goshen (Ex 9:26). When a thick darkness fell upon Egypt, the Israelites had light in all of their dwellings (Ex 10:23). When all of the firstborn in Egypt died in the last plague

God "put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel," and none of firstborn of Israel died" (Ex 11:5-7).

I am cautious at this point not to venture into the realm of speculation. **However, God has given the saints no cause to fear the demise of nature, whether over a brief or extended period.** He has told us that the whole creation, presently in "the bondage of corruption," is patiently waiting for the "manifestation of the sons of God" (Rom 8:19). **It appears to me to be unreasonable to think that those whose hearts have been removed from the world would be harmed or overly alarmed by its actual disintegration and demise. When it goes, all of our troubles go.**

**A UNIVERSAL PROMISE**

**"<sup>21</sup> And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."**

Joel prophesied, and Peter is confirming, things that will take place BEFORE "the great and notable day of the Lord." He has first declared a period during which God would pour forth His Spirit without discriminating between men and women. This would result in prophesying, which had been taking place before the multitude now before him. It will now continue to take place in an even more specific manner.

**IT SHALL COME TO PASS**

*"And it shall come to pass . . ."*

Other versions read, "And it shall be," NASB and "Then." NRSV

Joel not only prophesied that God would pour put His Spirit upon all flesh, but that a day would be ushered in that would have certain marvelous characteristics. This is something that was appointed by God, and it would surely come to pass. It is not something that might come to pass: it **would** come to pass. It is not something that would come to pass **if** some variable condition was met: it **would** come to pass. This is the language of Divine appointment, and will be brought to pass by Divine power.

Peter now announces to the people, that the very day in which he is speaking is the time when this word is being fulfilled. This would be a mark of the day of salvation. The door of salvation will be thrown wide open. No special race will be targeted. This will not be limited to any social class, or other group according to the flesh.

already spoken of "all flesh," "your sons and your daughters," and God's "servants" and "handmaidens." Now he makes it even more personal by saying "whosoever." The only qualification is the one that will be stated. **If that qualification is met, there is no natural or fleshly distinction that can disqualify the individual.**

**Further, no aspect of salvation will contradict this distinction by God making determinations according to the flesh. The outworking of salvation cannot resort to fleshly distinctions as a basis for Divine working within that salvation.**

**WHOSOEVER SHALL BE CALL ON THE NAME**

*" . . . that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord . . ."*

**"Whosoever"**

Other versions read, "everyone," RSV "whoever" BBE "all," NJB and "anyone."

LIVING Peter continues to point out the universality of Joel's promise. He has

Let it be clear that Peter is establishing the border of salvation. Further, no aspect of salvation will contradict this distinction by God making determinations according to the flesh. **The outworking of salvation cannot resort to fleshly distinctions as a basis for Divine working within that salvation.**

**"Call Upon the Name of the Lord"**

Other versions read, "makes his

*prayer to the Lord,*<sup>BBE</sup> *“asks for mercy from the Lord,”*<sup>LIVING</sup> *“trusts in the name of the Lord,”*<sup>IE</sup> and *“call upon the name of the Lord [invoking, adoring, and worshiping the Lord—Christ].”*<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

Peter now gives a wonderful summation of Joel’s words – which words are even more extensive. Joel wrote, *“And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: 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, Peter fastens on those who *“call upon the name of the Lord.”*

What does it mean to call upon the Lord’s name? It is an action that is frequently mentioned in Scripture.

- ⇨ In the days of Enos, the son of Seth, *“began men to call upon the name of the Lord”* (Gen 4:26).
- ⇨ *“And he [Abraham] removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD”* (Gen 12:8).
- ⇨ *“And he [Isaac] builded an altar there, and called upon the name of the LORD, and pitched his tent there: and there Isaac’s servants digged a well”* (Gen 26:25).
- ⇨ *“And call ye on the name of your gods, and I [Elijah] will call on the name of the LORD: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken”* (1 Kgs 18:24).
- ⇨ *“But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper”* (2 Kgs 5:11).
- ⇨ *“What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call*

*upon the name of the LORD”* (Psa 116:12-13).

- ⇨ *“I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD”* (Psa 116:17).
- ⇨ *“For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent”* (Zeph 3:9).
- ⇨ *“And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord”* (Acts 22:16).
- ⇨ *“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved”* (Rom 10:13).
- ⇨ *“Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours”* (1 Cor 1:2).

Calling upon the name of the Lord is invoking God through prayer, acknowledging that He alone is God.

pleases. Second, this *“call”* is a plea for God to come to the aid of the individual, work in his behalf, or make Himself more fully known to the one calling on God’s name.

The *“name of the Lord”* is what God has revealed about Himself. It refers to His being, character, and what may be known of Him. When Moses asked God to show him His glory, the Lord replied, *“And He said, I will make all My goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee”* (Ex 33:19). The actual proclamation is recorded. *“And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, unto the third and to the fourth generation”* (Ex 34:5-7).

The proclamation of the Lord’s

**Let it be clear that Peter is establishing the border of salvation. Further, no aspect of salvation will contradict this distinction by God making determinations according to the flesh. The outworking of salvation cannot resort to fleshly distinctions as a basis for Divine working within that salvation.**

That is, it is an earnest request for God to act, or to move, in the behalf of the individual. This kind of call is the result of the persuasion of at least two things: first, that *“God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward”* (Deut 10:17). This does not refer to a frantic stabbing in the dark, inquiring if there really is a God, then asking Him to make Himself known. Calling on the name of the Lord reveals the individual is convinced of who God is, and that He does whatsoever He

*“name”* was a declaration of His Person – His character and manner.

To *“call upon the name of the Lord”* is to beseech the Lord to focus those traits upon the individual; i.e., to show mercy, grace, and longsuffering toward the one who is calling out. To cause goodness and truth to come to such a one, and to forgive their sins. What has happened in such a case is that the individual has now made an association between his condition and what God is inclined to do. He sees his need for mercy

and grace, and thus pleads for it. He sees his need of goodness and truth, and, with a strong desire for them, beseeches the Lord to give them in abundance.

If, for example, a person wants a new Rolls Royce, an annual income in six figures, and a stately mansion, he cannot call upon **the name** of the Lord for them, for God has not declared Himself as being disposed to give such things. It is not that He cannot do this, but that this is not how He wishes to be known. If a person wants to make that desire known to the Lord, according to Philippians 4:6, I suppose it might be considered proper. However, it seems to me that it would be difficult to reconcile such requests with God's call to *"love not the world"* (1 John 2:15), *"set your affection on things above"* (Col 3:2), and *"lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth"* (Matt 6:19).

When a person calls *"upon the name of the Lord,"* he is asking God to respond in accordance with what He has revealed about Himself.

It is important to note that while preaching is one of the preeminent activities of *"the day of salvation,"* it is calling upon the name of the Lord that actually brings the blessing, **This suggests that the Gospel of Christ is calculated to constrain one to call upon the name of the Lord.** Where this is not done, the Gospel has not really been perceived or believed.



In our day, men have come up with different ways of appropriating salvation. Some ask the individual to repeat a certain prayer, following the

lead of the preacher. Others simply ask the people to come forward and receive prayer for their salvation. Such methodologies do not speak strongly of the yearning of the one who needs salvation. They do not encourage one to call upon the name of the Lord – to verbally and zealously seek what is being offered in the name of the Lord.

**Let me be clear about this. Only a response to the real Gospel of Christ can properly be referred as "calling upon the name of the Lord."** Acceptable calling requires the God-ordained message, and not *"another Gospel"* (2 Cor 11:4; Gal 1:6). It is quite possible that the prevalence of unacceptable conduct within the churches is directly related to the belief of *"another gospel"* – one that does not provoke one to *"call upon the name of the Lord."*

**SHALL BE SAVED**

*" . . . shall be saved."* Other versions read, *"will be saved,"*<sup>NIV</sup> *"will have salvation,"*<sup>BBE</sup> and *"shall live."*<sup>MRD</sup>

This same promise is reaffirmed in Romans 10:13. There the Spirit states that men cannot call upon the name of the Lord unless they have believed on Him: *"How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?"* Further, they cannot believe on the Lord unless they have heard of Him: *"and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?"* Further, they cannot hear without a preacher: *"and how shall they hear without a preacher?"* Even further, how can anyone preach unless they are sent *"And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"*(Rom 10:14-15).

What does it mean to be *"saved?"* Perhaps you have heard people say things like, "I am saved, but I am not living close to the Lord." Or, "I am a Christian, but not a committed one." Or, "I was a Christian, but was not walking with the Lord." Then, there are church cliches like "carnal Christian," or "worldly Christian," or "uncommitted Christians." All of this has caused people to speak glibly about being "saved." For some people being *"saved"* is the result of repeating the mythical "sinners prayer."

For others, it means they have been "baptized" – at least that is what they call it. A significant number of professing Christians rarely even use the term *"saved."* For example, I come from a background where this word was not part of the vocabulary.

The word *"saved"* occurs in the book of Acts ten times (2:21,47; 4:12; 11:14; 15:1,11; 16:30,31; 27:20,31). IKn those times, two refer to being saved from physical calamity (27:20,31).

As used in our text, the epistles use the word *"save"* fourteen times (Rom 11:14; 1 Cor 1:21; 2:2; 7:16; 9:22; 1 Tim 1:15; 4:16; Heb 7:25; James 1:1; 2:14; 4:12; 5:20; 1 Pet 3:21; Jude 1:23); *"saved"* is used twenty-one times (Rom 5:9,10; 8:24; 9:27; 10:1,9,13; 11:26; 1 Cor 1:18; 3:15; 5:5; 10:33; 15:2; ; 2 Cor 2:15; Eph 5:2,8; 1 Thess 2:16; 2 Thess 2:10; 1 Tim 2:4,15; 2 Tim 1:9; Tit 3:5; 1 Pet 4:16; 2 Pet 2:5; Jude 1:5); *"saving"* two times (Heb 10:39; 11:7; and *"Savior"* nineteen times (Eph 5:23; Phil 3:20; 1 Tim 1:1; 2:3; 1 Tim 4:10; 2 Tim 1:10; Tit 1:3,4; 2:10,13; 3:4,6; 2 Pet 1:1,11; 2 Pet 2:20; 3:2,18; 1 John 4:14; Jude 1:25).

**Any term or concept that is mentioned this many times ought to be a prominent part of the vocabulary of the church.**

The word *"save"* comes from the Greek word σωθησεται, the verb form of the Greek word σωζω (so-zo). The lexical meaning of this word is, "to save, to keep safe and sound, to rescue from danger and destruction, to save a suffering one from perishing, to make well, restore to health, to bring forth from; positively, to make one a partaker of the salvation of Christ,"<sup>THAYER</sup> *"save, rescue, bring to salvation,"*<sup>FRIEBERG</sup> and *"save rescue, deliver, keep safe, preserve, cure, make well."*<sup>UBS</sup>

Several concepts are captured by the word *"saved."* **These concepts speak of a change in ones moral and spiritual condition.**

⇒ **DELIVERANCE:** *rescue, bring out.* This presumes a former state of imprisonment, confinement, capture, and condemnation. When a person is *"saved,"* he is *"delivered from the Law"* – the condemning law (Rfom 7:6). He is also *"delivered from this present evil world"* – from its

dominance (Gal 1:4). There is also a deliverance "from the power of darkness" (Col 1:13), those Satanic powers that hold men captive. There is also deliverance "from the wrath to come" (1 Thess 1:10). There is even deliverance "out of temptation," so that we are not overcome by it (2 Pet 2:9). A salvation that does not deliver the people from the power and dominion of the enemy and the world is **not** "the salvation of God" (Psa 50:23; Acts 28:28).

⇒ **RECOVERY:** *get back, reclaim, redeem, revive.* This presumes a former state of lostness, forfeiture, decline, weakness, and perishing. How marvelous to consider that we have been "redeemed from the curse of the Law" (Gal 3:13), so that are free from condemnation. There is also redemption "from all iniquity," so that we live no longer in sin (Tit 2:14). Redemption is referred to as "the forgiveness of sins" (Col 1:14). A salvation that does not restore men to God and to spiritual wholeness **cannot** possibly be "the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (2 Tim 2:10).

⇒ **SAFETY:** *protection, security, defense.* This presumes a former condition of hazard, jeopardy, peril, and vulnerability. Isaiah foretold the conditions of safety that would be brought in by the Messiah. "And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land" (Isa 32:2). Ponder the wonderful and reassuring word: "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not" (1 John 5:18). A salvation that leaves people vulnerable to the devil and subject to fits and starts is **not** "the salvation of the Lord" (Lam 3:26).

⇒ **PRESERVATION:** *keep, sustain, maintain.* This presumes a previous state of deterioration, weakness, and imminent death. To know that we are kept has a stabilizing effect upon the soul. "He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: **He that keepeth thee**

*will not slumber"* (Psa 121:3). Again we are reminded, "Who are **kept by the power of God** through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pet 1:5). A salvation that allows for people to fall, go backward, forget, and stumble through life has nothing whatsoever to do with "the salvation of our God" (Isa 52:10).

The state from which we were saved is often mentioned in Scripture. It is always a **past** condition.

⇒ "But God be thanked, that **ye were the servants of sin**, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. . . For when ye **were the servants of sin**,

2:12).

⇒ "But now in Christ Jesus **ye who sometimes were far off** are made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Eph 2:13).

⇒ "For **ye were sometimes darkness**, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light" (Eph 5:8).

⇒ "Which **in time past were not a people**, but are now the people of God: which **had not obtained mercy**, but now have obtained mercy" (1 Pet 2:10).

⇒ "For **ye were as sheep going astray**: but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls"

**Isaiah foretold the conditions of safety that would be brought in by the Messiah. "And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land"**

*ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death"* (Rom 6:17,20-21).

⇒ "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. **And such were some of you:** but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor 6:9-11).

⇒ "That at that time **ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world"** (Eph

(1 Pet 2:25).

Isaiah foretold the conditions of safety that would be brought in by the Messiah. "And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land" From the very beginning of the church people who are said to have been "saved" experienced and manifested the kind of changes the prophets said would come to pass.

When Peter referred to being "saved," the "devout men" before him would have a good idea about what he meant. When seven years of famine struck the land of Egypt, and Joseph, directed by the Lord, resolved the dilemma, the people said, "Thou hast **saved our lives**" (Gen 47:25). When Israel passed safely through the Red Sea on dry ground, then saw their enemies drowned in the same sea, the record was written up in these words: "Thus **the LORD saved Israel** that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the

Egyptians dead upon the sea shore” (Ex 14:30). When Moses stood before the people at the end of his days, he cried out to them, “Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, **O people saved by the LORD, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places**” (Deut 33:29). When Israel realized victory over the Philistines, the record was written up in these words: “So

**the LORD saved Israel that day: and the battle passed over unto Bethaven**” (1 Sam 14:23).

These men no doubt knew the various expressions of the Psalmist which spoke of salvation. “Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine; **and we shall be saved**” (Psa 80:3). “Turn us again, O God of hosts, and cause thy face to shine; **and we shall be saved**” (Psa 80:7). “Turn us again, O LORD God of

hosts, cause thy face to shine; and **we shall be saved**” (Psa 80:19). Now Peter will put the matter squarely before them.

**This is the day when salvation will be realized by whoever calls upon the name of the Lord!** Now that Peter has the ears of the people, he will proclaim the name of the Lord as it has been revealed in Christ Jesus – in particular as it was revealed in Christ’s death and resurrection.

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## CONCLUSION

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We are being exposed to the time when God first poured out His Spirit upon “all flesh” – both men and women. This has been done in strict accord with the “promise of the Father,” as expounded by the Lord Jesus, the prophecies of the prophets in general, and the of Joel in particular. This whole matter sets the stage for the very nature of life in Christ Jesus. This is the inauguration of the New Covenant, and serves to confirm the nature of that wonderful “ministration of the Spirit,” as the New Covenant is called (2 Cor 3:8).

The Spirit’s abundance is described as Him being “poured forth,” lavished upon the people because of atoning death of Jesus Christ. Peter will affirm that Jesus has caused what the people are seeing and hearing, and that it is in strict accord with His role as the Savior of the world. In fact, Jesus is declared to have done this in His exalted capacity of “both Lord and Christ” (2:36). With great power, Peter will relate the death, resurrection, and exaltation of Christ with the events being witnessed by the people.

The day of Pentecost is not at end of itself, but was the beginning of a new era – an era in which the outworking of the eternal purpose of God was commenced, and in which men and women would be prepared for the world to come. Years later Peter will refer to this very day as “the beginning” (Acts 11:15). The more we are able to see that day as a “beginning,” the more we will be able to glean from it. Everything occurring on that day will reflect the revealed purpose of God, administered and completed by the Lord Jesus.

**Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 8/11/2006 – one week later than originally scheduled. This is owing to the Renewal, and the lengthy return trip. We will continue our current series of lessons on the book of Acts. The eighth lesson will cover verses twenty-two through twenty-four of the second chapter: “THE PREACHING OF JESUS: HIS DEATH.” Care must be taken to avoid simplicity when speaking of the death of the Lord Jesus. His death was an accomplishment, a purposed work of God. It was accomplished in strict accord with the determined “counsel and foreknowledge” of God. 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.**

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