

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 # 14

COMMENTARY ON: 3:12-18

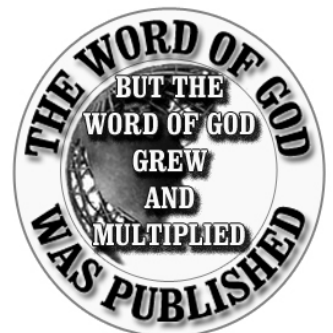
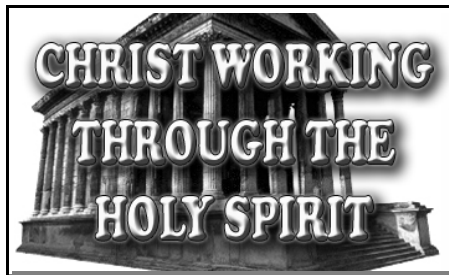
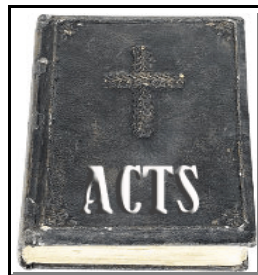
PETER SPEAKS TO THE PEOPLE, #1

How does a man of God speak to people who are attracted by a mighty miracle to come running to him? If he does speak to them, what will he say, and how will he say it? What kind of opportunity will he see before him? In this text these questions, and more, will be answered. We will find the man of God comprehending the circumstances and delivering words that were "fitly spoken" (Prov 25:11). He will also speak with an acute understanding of the nature of sinful man, the Kingdom of God, and the objectives of salvation. He will face the people with what they did to Jesus, the circumstances under which they did it, and why they did it. Peter will not allow undue glory to go to himself and John. He also will not allow glory to fail to go to God. He will not permit the people to remain in ignorance concerning Jesus – who He was, what he did, and how God had glorified Him. All of this will be accomplished in a single message. It will be delivered with obvious confidence and great convicting power.

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)

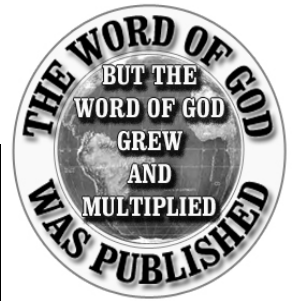


Since May, 1993, a ministry instituted for the encouragement of believers in Christ



The Book of Acts

Lesson Number 14



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

TRANSLATION LEGEND: ALT = Analytical-Literal Translation (2005), AMPLIFIED = Amplified Bible (1965), ASV = American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), DRA = Douay-Rheims (1899), ERV = English Revised Version (1885), ESV = English Stand Version (2001), GNB = Good News (1966), GWN = God's Word (1995), IE = International English, ISV = International Standard Version (1967), JPS = Jewish Publication Society (1917), KJV = King James Version (1611), L.ITV = **Literal Translation of the Bible** ((1976), LIVING = Living Bible (1971), MKJV = Modern KJV (1962), MONTGOMERY = Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD = Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB = New American Bible (2002), NASB = New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU = New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB = New International Bible, NIV = New International Version (1984), NJB = New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV = New King James Version (1979), NLT =New Living Translation (1996), NRSV = New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS = J B Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT = BISHOP'S New Testament (1595), RSV = Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK = JPS Tanakj (1985), Webster = The Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH = Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS = William's New Testament (1937), TYNDALE = Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE = Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT =Young's Literal Translation (1862).

----- **Lexicon and Bible Translation Codes with Identification** -----
LEXICON LEGEND: FRIEBERG = Friberg Lexicon, UBS = UBS Lexicon, LOUW-NIDA = Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT = Liddell Scott Lexicon, THAYER = Thayer's Greek Lexicon, LEH = LEH Lexicon, GINGRICH = Gingrich Lexicon

THE INSPIRED RECORD OF HOW THE ENTHRONED CHRIST, BY MEANS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, WORKED THROUGH HIS HOLY APOSTLES AND GODLY MEN, TO SPREAD THE WORD OF THE GOSPEL THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE WORLD, AND TO BRING EDIFICATION AND STABILITY TO MEMBERS OF CHRIST'S BODY.

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 SPEAKS TO THE PEOPLE, #1

“^{3:12} And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? ¹³ The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified His Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied Him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. ¹⁴ But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; ¹⁵ And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. ¹⁶ And His name through faith in His name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by Him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. ¹⁷ And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. ¹⁸ But those things, which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled.” (Acts 3:12-18)

INTRODUCTION

How does a man of God speak to people who are attracted by a mighty miracle to come running to him? If he does speak to them, what will he say, and how will he say it? What kind of opportunity will he see before him?

In this text these questions, and more, will be answered. **We will find the**

man of God comprehending the circumstances and delivering words that were “fitly spoken” (Prov 25:11). He will also speak with an acute understanding of the nature of sinful man, the Kingdom of God, and the objectives of salvation. He will have an understanding of what God is doing. He will also face the people with what they did to Jesus, the

circumstances under which they did it, and why they did it.

Peter will not allow undue glory to go to himself and John. He also will not permit glory to fail to go to God. He will not let the people to remain in ignorance concerning Jesus – who He was, what He did, and how God had

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glorified Him. All of this will be accomplished in a single message. It will be delivered with obvious confidence and great convicting power. No worldly agenda will be found in what he says.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF UNDERSTANDING

As we walk through this text, it will be very apparent that a different manner of understanding is being employed than is being touted in the church of our time. **We will be exposed to an understanding that has Jesus Christ as its absolute center-point.** What men think of Jesus is the key area of thought. How they respond to the Son of God is considered their fundamental response. What they do for Jesus is their primary activity.

Peter will speak from a lofty position in which it is surprising that truth is not perceived, or that wrong conclusions are reached. He is not naive, but informed. It is his grasp of truth that moves him to speak in such a manner.

CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES

The nominal church has propped itself up on the crutches of scholasticism and the favor of men. Because of this, its leaders, for the most part, are not able to

navigate in the ocean of Divine purpose or objective. It is too deep and intimidating for them. **Therefore, they have chosen to sail their theological vessels on humanly conceived tributaries of truth – and that is the most favorable view of the situation.** To them, *truth* has to do with what men consider *practical*. They see relevancy as something that assists men in fulfilling **their own** ambitions, which relate exclusively to **this** world. This is a mindset that now dominates the *Christian* world. It has given rise to a new kind of religious professional – self-acclaimed experts in matters relating to life in the world, yet who function in the name of Christ.

Religious specialists and counselors now negotiate on the shallow ponds of marital life, political circumstances, organizational issues, and motivational climes. **They do this because redemptive matters are too deep for them, and therefore they have no appetite for them.** This is because *“the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned”* (1 Cor 2:14). Were it not for the corruption of religion, they would have no part in it, for the world is really the field in which they prefer to plow. Of such teachers **John** wrote, *“They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them”* (1 John 4:5). **Paul** said of them, *“For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple”* (Rom 16:18). **Peter** said of them, *“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction”* (2 Pet 2:1).

Jude spoke of these intruders, describing them according to their

character. *“Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core. These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever”* (Jude 1:11-13). **In other words, these pretenders have nothing of spiritual substance to offer the people of God.** Their message neither promotes nor maintains faith. A hope that sustains the soul is not obtained through their words.

The passage before us has no relevancy to such men. It is not the kind of text upon which you can build a career, a religious institution, or fame. Yet, we are being exposed to the expressions of men who are filled with the Holy Spirit. In this case, Peter will assess his audience, and deliver words through which the Holy Spirit will work. He is not only handling the truth, he is doing so as one *“approved of God”* (2 Tim 2:15).

THE NECESSITY OF PROPERLY FOCUSED THOUGHT

Spiritual Babylon brings a different focus – one that is clearly skewed toward this world. **Within the professed Christian community, all false doctrine focuses on this world.** This does not mean there is no mention of the Lord's return, heaven, rewards, judgment, and the likes. **However, they all come behind issues relating to life in this world.** The shape of false theology is determined by *the here and the now*, and life in the body. The real essence of such religion is what occurs in this world, not what will take place in the world to come.

By way of contrast, **Apostolic doctrine approaches this life with the life**

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to come in mind. In fact, when boiling down the subject matter of the message of Hebrews, the Spirit makes to succinct statements.

- ⇨ *“For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak”* or *“about which we are speaking”*^{NIV} (Heb 2:5).
- ⇨ *“Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: **We have such an High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a Minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man**”* (Heb 8:1-2).

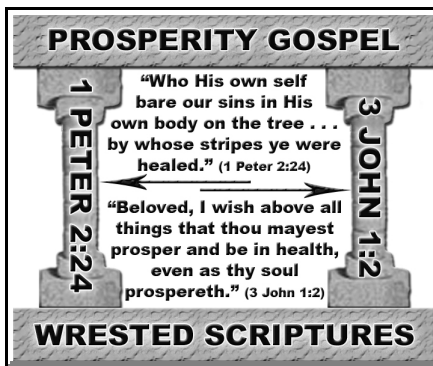
Therefore, so far as **place** is concerned, *“the world to come,”* or the heavenly *“sanctuary”* is the emphasis. It is referred to as *“the world to come”* from the perspective of our future presence in, and involvement with, it. It is called the *“sanctuary”* with Christ’s present activity in mind.

With little effort, we should be able to conclude that the main place is the heavenly realms – where Jesus presently resides. The main Person is the Lord Jesus Christ, through whom every need, benefit, and advantage come to men. **A religion – any religion – that does not lead men to conclude that Jesus Christ is the fundamental and preeminent Man, and that heaven is the primary place, cannot possibly be true.** If earth was the main place, Jesus would have stayed here. If life in this world was the main life, then there would be no need for faith and hope, both of which have to do with the unseen realm.

The Word of Faith Movement

In the past few years, televangelists have affirmed that when Jesus said He had been anointed to *“preach the Gospel to the poor”* (Lk 4:18), that news meant they would no longer be *“poor.”* Officially termed *“The Word of Faith Movement,”* **this theological approach affirms that healing and prosperity are in the atonement** – that is, that Jesus died to procure bodily health and financial prosperity for Adam’s race. In this view, faith has primarily to do with improving one’s life in the flesh – life in this world.

This doctrine us built upon two primary texts.



- ⇨ *“Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: **by whose stripes ye were healed**”* (1 Pet 2:24).
- ⇨ *“Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest **prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth**”* (3 John 1:2).

As already stated, a fundamental supposition that theoretically undergirds this corruption is that the blood atonement includes provision for both health and prosperity – that is, that Christ’s death paid for, or redeemed from, sickness and poverty. The First Peter text, which alludes to Isaiah 53:5, is affirmed to support this view. It is also stated that Isaiah 53:4 and Matthew 8:17 declare this to be the case: *“Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted”* (Isa 53:4). Matthew reads, *“When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: **that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses**”* (Matt 8:17).

Unlike these false prophets, Matthew says that prophecy was fulfilled in Jesus’ earthly ministry, not in His death. His healing of the sick when He *“went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed of the devil”* (Acts 10:38) fulfilled Isaiah’s word, not His death upon the cross, or the

administration the chastening stripes of God (not those administered by men).

Peter further defines what is meant by *were healed*: **“For ye were as**

The message preached today is God desires His children to be wealthy. Kenneth Hagin says that God not only wants to deliver believers from poverty, “He [also] wants His children to eat the best, He wants them to wear the best clothing, He wants them to drive the best cars, and He wants them to have the best of everything.” (Quoted by D.L. McConnell *A Different Gospel p.175*) Fred Price agrees and boldly says, “That’s the reason why I drive a Rolls Royce.” (*Ever Increasing Faith program, TBN Dec.9, 1990*)

“Financial prosperity is just as much a part of the Gospel as anything else. ...And I’m going to tell you something right now. I’m with the Apostle Paul in Romans chapter one: I’m not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, ...I’m not ashamed of prosperity. I’m not ashamed that Jesus bought and paid for me to be wealthy....Let me just tell you from the heart of God, preachers are supposed to be rich.” (Marcus Bishop, *Praise The Lord Telethon, November 2, 1998*)

“Poverty is from the devil and that God wants all Christians prosperous.” (Benny Hinn, *TBN, 11/6/90*)

“The very first thing on Jesus’ agenda was to get rid of poverty! Would you like to know why some people, including ministries, never get out of poverty? Its not because they aren’t smart. Its not because they don’t have windows of opportunity. Its because they’re not anointed. If you’re not anointed, poverty will follow you all the days of your life. His first objective was to get rid of poverty.” (Jesse Duplantis, *Nov. 1997 Voice of the Covenant magazine p.5*)

“You will walk in blessings, favor, prosperity, health and wealth, and you will do this without having to pursue wealth. First you must seek God’s method of operation and His righteousness. When you find out how to live your life according to the Word of God you will become a money magnet. . . Well, you need to hear about money, because you ain’t gonna have no love and joy and peace until you get some money!” (*Creflo Dollar, Praise the Lord, July 20, 1990*)

“According to Word-Faith theology, financial prosperity and wealth was also included in the Atonement. This is based on an interpretation of the words of the Apostle Paul: ‘Yet for your sakes he became poor, that you by his poverty might become rich’ (2 Corinthians 8:9). Critics believe Paul was speaking of spiritual riches, rather than material prosperity. Faith proponents support their view by arguing that the context is the giving of material wealth. It is often taught that Jesus and the apostles were rich, and therefore believers should expect the same financial success. Supporters such as Kenneth Copeland have argued that Prosperity Gospel is validated by the teachings of the Apostle John: ‘Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth’ (3 John 2). Copeland posits that ‘as the seeds of prosperity are planted in your mind, in your will and in your emotions...they eventually produce a great financial harvest.’” *Wikipedia Encyclopedia, Word of Faith Movement*

sheep going astray; but are now **returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls**" (1 Pet 2:25). The healing was from straying, not from being sick! That, of course, is exactly what Isaiah said as well: *"But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all"* (Isa 53:5-6). God did not wound Jesus because we were ill, or because we were poor! He was not "bruised" because we were sick, or because we lacked earthly resources. He was not chastened for our health, but for our peace. The Lord did not lay our sicknesses upon Christ, but our "iniquities." It was not our illnesses He bore in His body on the tree (1 Pet 2:24).

It was not our bodily health that alienated us from God, for that was not the **common** malady among men. We were not separated from God because we were sick and poor, and it is a gross and deliberate misrepresentation of the case to affirm such a thing. All men are not sick, and all men are not poor – yet Jesus "died for all" (2 Cor 5:14,15), "gave Himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim 2:6), and His body was offered "once for all" (Heb 10:10). Words like "reconcile," "justify," "sanctify," and "wash" do not apply to illness and poverty, but to the guilt and contamination of sin and iniquity. It is "enemies" that are "reconciled" (Rom 5:10). Men are justified from sin (Rom 3:23-24). Sanctification is associated with wisdom, righteousness, and redemption – not health and wealth (1 Cor 1:30). Washing has to do with being cleansed from sin, not sickness or poverty (Acts 22:16; 1 Cor 6:9-11; Rev 1:5).

WHY SAY THESE THINGS?

It is necessary to say these things because, in our text, **we are being exposed to the setting up of the Kingdom**

of God (Dan 2:44; Lk 22:18; Acts 28:31). **If the above doctrine is true, it will be preached at the beginning, when the foundation is being laid.** If deliverance from sickness and poverty is what redemption is all about, then Peter will surely proclaim it with power and clarity, for he has "the keys of the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 16:19). Or, is this a doctrine that was not clear when the Lord Jesus poured out the Holy Spirit, and His disciples were "filled with the Spirit," and spoke "as the Spirit gave them utterance."

If Peter did not preach this gospel of prosperity in the beginning, then those who do preach it must be held in account for why they do so. Has God revealed something to them that was not revealed to Peter? Have they received keys that Peter did not receive? Have men now believed on Jesus through their word, instead of through the words of the Apostles, as Jesus said (John 17:20)?

Estimated Size of Renewalist Populations			
The surveys find that the size of the renewalst population varies from country to country.			
	Pente-costals	Charis-matics	Total (Renew-alists)
United States	5%	18%	=23%
Latin America			
Brazil	15	34	=49
Chile	9	21	=30
Guatemala	20	40	=60
Africa			
Kenya	33	23	=56
Nigeria	18	8	=26
South Africa	10	24	=34
Asia			
India (localities)	1	4	=5
Philippines	4	40	=44
South Korea	2	9	=11

The Rapid Growth of This Group

The New York Times (10/5/2006) estimates that 25% of the total Christian population (2.3 Billion) is in this group (575,000). The most recent survey of ten nations show their remarkable influence.

Nearly all of these people subscribe to and embrace the prosperity gospel. It dominates the air waves of both radio and television. The majority of the mega-churches represent this line of thought. We are not speaking of a small and fledgling movement. By comparison, the Restoration Movement, with its three primary branches, comprise about 3 million people. The movement called "renewalists" has just celebrated its 100th anniversary, and it is well **over 575 million**, and growing. Yet, though gaining in size and popularity, it is promoting a **primary** view that **requires** one to wrest the Scriptures.

IF THE VIEW IS CORRECT

If the view of health and wealth – the prosperity gospel – is true, it will be made known in the beginning chapters of the book of Acts. This is the record of the beginning of the church Jesus said He would "build" (Matt 16:16). The first outpouring of the Spirit is recorded, as well as the first anointed public proclamation of the exalted Christ. We have the first inspired exposition of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. The door of salvation is first opened, and for the first time, inquiring souls are told what to do, and what to expect.

In our text the record of a specific man being healed at a particular time is given. It will prove to be an occasion that will result in Peter delivering a word about Jesus. He will trace Jesus' sufferings back to the prophets, and deliver an inspired view of what was entailed in that suffering. **Individuals will have to judge for themselves whether or not it is appropriate to imagine that a differing view of the purpose of Christ's death can possibly be delivered later by means of the Holy Spirit.** If such a view is entertained, then some form of reasoning must be presented that justifies such a conclusion, particularly when that reasoning clashes with Peter's preaching.

PETER SAW AND ANSWERED

3:12a **And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people . . . "**

One of the confirmations of a person being directed by God is their

ability to recognize a situation, and properly respond to it. Our text for this

When God works by His mighty power, insightful souls can seize the opportunity for His glory – by Given O. Blakely

lesson begins with what Peter saw, and the consequent action resulting from that insight.

PETER SAW

“And when Peter saw it . . .” Other versions read, “when Peter saw this,”^{NASB} “And Peter, seeing it,”^{DARBY} “But Peter seeing,”^{DOUAY} “When Peter saw the people,”^{NJB} “When Peter saw his opportunity,”^{NLT} “when Peter saw that,”^{TNT} “Peter having seen,”^{YLT} and “and seeing this, Peter.”^{LITV}

Once the people saw a familiar

⇨ It is said of Jesus prodigious ministry, “The people which sat in darkness **saw** great light” (Matt 4:16).

⇨ The same word is translated “know” in Paul’s prayer for the Ephesians. “The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may **know** what is the hope of his calling . . .” (Eph 1:18).

⇨ The word is again translated “know” in the Thessalonian letter, when Paul said he was aware of their

could buy some food (Mk 6:36). **In all of those circumstances the disciples saw, yet did not perceive.**

What was the difference in this occasion? Why didn’t Peter think this crowd to be a distraction? It was because he was “*endued with power from on high*,” as Jesus had promised (Lk 24:49). **This “power” enabled him to discern the circumstances and know what to do when he confronted them.** That is an aspect of God working within men that has been largely lost in a time when entertainment and men-pleasing have become dominate.

PETER ANSWERED

“ . . . he answered unto the people . . .” Other versions read, “he responded to the people,”^{NKJV} “he replied to the people,”^{NASB} “he said to them,”^{NIV} “he addressed the people,”^{NRSV} “he said to the people,”^{BBE} “he answered and said to them,”^{MRD} “he declared to the people,”^{NET} “addressed the crowd,”^{NLT} and “spoke to the people.”^{WEYMOUTH}

The word “answered” comes from a Greek word meaning, “to give an answer to,”^{THAYER} and “to reply to a questioner or question.”^{LIDDELL-SCOTT} Here, however, there has been no question addressed to Peter – yet, he is said to have “answered.”

In this text, “answer” does not mean replying to a question or inquiry, but **responding to a circumstance**. One time, when Jesus was in the process of upbraiding the cities “*wherein most of His mighty works were done*,” He is said to have “answered” without anyone asking Him a question. “*At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight*” (Mat 11:25-26). Another time, when the Pharisees sought to lay hands on Him, and without them asking Him anything, “*Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said*” (Matt 22:1). Another time, a blind man named Bartimaeus was told that Jesus called for him. He threw off his cloak and came to Jesus. Without the man saying a word to Jesus, “*Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?*” (Mark 10:51). When Jesus saw a

Here, however, the emphasis is on him perceiving an open door – an opportunity much like that which took place on the day of Pentecost when “the multitude came together” (Acts 2:6). At that time they were also drawn together by the working of the Lord.

man leaping, walking and praising God, and recognized that this was the same man who had been regularly begging at one of the Temple gates, “*all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon’s, greatly wondering*” (3:11). This is what Peter “saw,” and his sight was not limited to what his eyes beheld. He saw what appeared to the eye, but what he took into his heart and mind was more than what his eyes beheld. The word translated “saw” means “to know... to perceive . . . notice, discern, discover.”^{THAYER}

In a rare show of technical accuracy, the New Living Translation correctly renders the sense of the text: “When Peter **saw his opportunity**.”

The use of this word emphasizes discernment – perceiving the significance of a thing, and seizing the opportunity.

⇨ The wise men who came to worship the Holy Child confessed, “*we have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him*” (Matt 2:2).

⇨ When Jesus was baptized He “*saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him*” (Matt 3:16).

election. “**Knowing**, brethren beloved, your election of God” (1 Thess 1:4).

⇨ Again, when speaking of the Lord’s return in glory, Paul writes that He will come “*In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ*” (2 Thess 1:8).

Therefore, in this text, in saying Peter “saw them,” the Spirit means refers to more than the seeing of the eye. To be sure, Peter witnessed the people running together. **Here, however, the emphasis is on him perceiving an open door** – an opportunity much like that which took place on the day of Pentecost when “*the multitude came together*” (Acts 2:6). At that time they were also drawn together by the working of the Lord.

Being himself enlightened, Peter will not turn away the people as the disciples once did when the children were being brought to Jesus (Matt 19:13); or when they asked Jesus to “send away” that “*woman of Canaan*” who sought for help for her daughter (Matt 15:23); or when the disciples asked Jesus to send away the hungering multitudes that were lingering with Him, so that they

fig tree with nothing but leaves, He **“answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever”** (Mark 11:14). When Jesus was arrested in the garden, before anyone asked a question, **“Jesus answered and said unto them, Are ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and with staves to take Me?”** (Mark 14:48). When Peter cut off Malchus’ ear, **“Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And He touched his ear, and healed him”** (Luke 22:51).

In all of these case, Jesus was responding to a circumstance, a situation, an opportunity. He perceived the situation and uttered words appropriate for the occasion. Jesus is still this way, answering situations and circumstances, speaking words to the heart when He has been asked no questions.

Thus Peter, having the mind and spirit of Christ, perceives the situation and has something to say. **Because he has a grasp of the circumstance, and sees it in view of the purpose of God, he knows that to say.** He does not have to ask questions of the multitude, inquiring what is on their minds, or why they have come running to him and John as the former lame man held onto them. Unlike the psychiatrists and counselors of the day, he does not have to probe their background, inquire into their past, and obtain sundry information that will assist him in knowing what to say. **He already has a grasp of the situation, and has no need to ask what the people want.** He already knows what they need.

Under the New Covenant the people, particularly those chosen to lead, can have a grasp of a situation, knowing what to do. Under the Old Covenant, this was not always the case. For example, under the Law there were occasions when the people had to ask counsel of the Lord. During these times, the judgment of the Lord was often made known in an **impersonal** manner – by mans of **“the judgment of the Urim before the Lord”** (Num 27:21). This was a stone that, together with **“the Thumim,”** was kept in **“the breastplate of judgment”** (Ex 28:20), and very little is known about them. It was one of the means by which an answer from God was obtained. Dreams and prophets were two other means (1

Sam 28:6). These two stones apparently stood for a Divine “Yes” and “No,” with the Urim standing for “Yes.” This means of obtaining direction appears to have been quite similar to the casting of lots.



The thing to be seen here is that **men were often directed independently of discernment, or a personal understanding of the situation.** During those times, sin had not yet been taken away, and thus men did not participate in the Divine nature. Their hearts had not been circumcised, they did not have a new spirit, and the Holy Spirit did not dwell in them. By way of comparison we are told, **“And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect”** (Heb 11:39-40). They did not enjoy the benefits of the New Covenant in which all of the people **“know the Lord,”** having His laws put into their hearts and written into their minds (Heb 10:16).

We are also told that the purpose of God, as realized in Christ Jesus, 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). **Whatever may be said of the most excellent of the human race prior to Christ, they did not have the advantages that are now realized by all saints, by grace through faith.** For this reason Divine direction and confirmation often came by comparatively crude means. It might be a **“sound in the tops of the mulberry trees”** (2 Sam 5:24), dew seen either on or off of a fleece spread upon the ground (Judges 6:37-40), the casting of lots (Lev 16:8), a personal dream (Gen

46:2-4), or overhearing a man relating a dream (Judges 7:13-15).

I approach this matter with extreme caution, lest I be misunderstood, or leave the impression that men no longer rely upon the Lord. Yet, there is something to be said about possessing **“the mind of Christ”** (1 Cor 2:16), having the eyes of our heart **“enlightened”** (Eph 1:18), and being **“filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding”** (Col 1:9). **In Jesus, God has given more of Himself to men, and brought the redeemed into a lofty partnership in which they work together with Him** (1 Cor 3:9).

It is not comely for those who are in Christ and have tasted of the heavenly gift to walk about in perpetual ignorance, never knowing what to do, and unable to assess the circumstances in which they find themselves. This is not to say that everything will always be crystal clear to us, or that we will never grapple with ignorance. **It IS to say that life in Christ is not lived within the tent of ignorance.** We are summoned to so present ourselves to the Lord that we will come to **“discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect”** ^{NRSV} (Rom 12:2).

The Magnitude of the Challenge

In every circumstance of life there are a number of significant factors. There is the presence of diverse personalities. For the child of God, the Holy Spirit is present to direct, illuminate, and empower. Satanic hosts are also present to deceive, blind, and lure into sin. There are also human personalities – **“flesh and blood”** – against whom we do not wrestle, yet which can capture our attention and distort our judgement.

Behind the circumstance, and hidden from all natural senses, there are certain objectives and tendencies. There is an eternal purpose under which everything is operating (Eph 1:10-11; 3:11). There is also the intention of the devil, who has come down to earth **“having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time”** (Rev 12:12). Then, there is the matter human nature – a fallen nature that is bent in the wrong direction, seeks self, and has no clear view of humanity, the world, or

God Himself. Often, there is also the factor of redeemed men, who are seeking the things above, are strangers in this world, and are seeking “a better country, that is, an heavenly” (Heb 11:16).

With that rather complex set of circumstances, how is a person to know what to do? Regarding our text, how will Peter know what to do? He is with a man whose heart has been touched, and he is leaping and praising God. He is with John, a fellow worker, who thinks as he does. He is confronting some people who

have recently called for the death of Jesus, and yet have been intrigued by what is happening before their eyes.

Peter and John do not step to the side, withdrawing from the people to pray and seek Divine guidance. They are not thrown into a state of consternation in which they do not have the slightest idea what to do. They do not run away from the circumstance, being intimidated by it. **You at once sense that Peter is actually in charge of the circumstance.** He knows exactly what has happened to

the man who insists on remaining with them. He knows why that lame man is leaping and praising God. He also knows the people who are running to them, and what they have done in the past. He does not fear that they will kill him and John as they did Jesus. It is not that he is simply a brave soul. **He is rather a discerning soul – one who is in fellowship with God’s Son and knows what He is doing from heaven.** Peter will therefore speak with discernment and confidence, and therefore with power and effectiveness.

WHY MARVEL YE AT THIS?

“^{12b} Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?”

Here we will behold the confidence with which Peter speaks – just as he did on the day of Pentecost. He is not intimidated by this circumstance. **He is walking in the light and knows what to do and say.** This is one of the remarkable benefits of maintaining the fellowship with Christ into which God has called us (1 Cor 1:9). Peter and John do not have to pray on this occasion, seeking Divine guidance. They do not have to summon the other apostles to assist them in deciphering the proper response to this multitude. Solomon once said, “in the multitude of counselors there is safety” (Prov 11:14; 24:6). Again he said, “in the multitude of counselors they are established” (Prov 15:22). **In this case, however, these words have no place, for Peter is in fellowship with the Master Teacher.**

John will write later of the advantages of being taught by God – particularly through the Holy Spirit: “But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and **ye need not that any man teach you:** but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him” (1 John 2:27). John is referring to the **use** of the truth rather than its acquisition – to the **employment** of

wisdom in situations for which there are no express instructions in Scripture.

Therefore Peter, with a grasp on the truth and a perception of the opportunity before him, speaks with **great assurance and power.** It ought to be noted that powerful speaking is always attended by confidence and assurance.

YE MEN OF ISRAEL

Ye men of Israel . . . Other versions read, “You Israelites,” ^{NRSV} “Men, sons of Israel,” ^{MRD} “People of Israel,” ^{NLT} “Men, Israelites,” ^{YLT} “Israelites,” ^{WEYMOUTH} and “Fellow Israelites.” ^{ISV}

As elementary as it may be, the word “men” is not a description of gender, but is used of all mankind in general. Thus we read of followers of Jesus being “hated of **all men**” (Matt 10:22), that “**all**

pouring out His Spirit upon “**all flesh,**” including sons and daughters, and God’s servants and handmaidens (Acts 2:17-18), it is not likely that Peter would speak only to males.

Peter addresses the people according to their God-ordained lineage: “men of Israel,” or offspring of Jacob. From a politician’s point of view, they might have been considered vassals of the State of Rome. From the scribes and Pharisees viewpoint, they might have been considered as devotees to the Law. Peter, however, perceives them in their most noble status.

WHY DO YOU MARVEL?

“ . . . why marvel ye at this?” Other versions read, “why do you marvel at this?” ^{NKJV} “why does this surprise you?” ^{NIV} “why do you wonder at this?”

One of the marked distinctions between Peter and John and the modern church is this: the modern church is surprised if anything unusual or supernatural takes place. Peter and John would have been surprised if such things did not take place.

men should honor the Son” (John 5:23), and that the crucified Christ would “draw **all men** unto” unto Himself (John 12:32). **With the announced fulfillment of God**

^{NRSV} “why are you so greatly amazed at this man?” ^{BBE} “why are you astonished at this?” ^{DARBY} “why are you amazed about this man?” ^{GWN} “why are you so surprised

at this?"^{NJB} *"what is so surprising about this?"*^{NLT} and *"Why are you so surprised and wondering at this?"*^{AMPLIFIED}

One of the marked distinctions between Peter and John and the modern church is this: **the modern church is surprised if anything unusual or supernatural takes place. Peter and John would have been surprised if such things did not take place.**

Take hold of the gravity of this situation. A man of over forty years of age, who had been lame from the day he was born, was instantly cured, and is walking, leaping, and praising God in the Temple courts. Seeing this take place, the multitude come running to *"them"* – the man, together with Peter and John. Boldly, Peter asks them, *"Why are you so greatly surprised at this man?"*^{BBE} It is as though he asked, "what is all of this excitement about?" This certainly was not the response of Peter and John to the

and had healed great numbers of people *"in the Temple"* (Matt 21:14). He had gone throughout their cities and villages *"teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people"* (Matt 9:35). His *"fame"* as a miracle worker had spread throughout the entire region, and even into *"all Syria"* (Matt 4:24; 9:26-31; Lk 4:37). Now, within a little over fifty days, they had apparently forgotten about Jesus of Nazareth, even though the world had never before, nor since, beheld such a display of Divine power in a Man. In addition to all of this, Pentecost had taken place, followed by the disciples continuing to meet daily in the Temple (Acts 2:46), with *"many wonders and signs"* being *"done by the apostles"* (Acts 2:43). **Yet, all of this had not impacted this multitude.**

Do you wonder at the obtuseness of the flesh? Wonder no more! **Even when**

them with the wisdom that comes down from above.

WHO DO YOU LOOK EARNESTLY AT US?

"... or why look ye so earnestly on us..." Other versions read, *"why look so intently on us?"*^{NKJV} *"why do you gaze at us?"*^{NASB} *"why do you stare at us?"*^{NIV} *"why fasten ye your eyes on us?"*^{ASV} *"why are you looking at us?"*^{BBE} *"why look ye so steadfastly on us,"*^{GENEVA} and *"why do you keep staring at us?"*^{AMPLIFIED}

This is the kind of attention false prophets and charlatans crave. However, Peter and John do not have a lust for attention. They are *"ambassadors of Christ,"* and they desire attention to be given to Him. That is what godly men do. **They do not just talk about Jesus receiving the attention, they see to it that through their words that actually happens – whether the people consent to it or not.** It is one thing to talk about Jesus getting the glory, it is quite another to see to it that He does.

POWER OR HOLINESS

"... as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?" Other versions read, *"as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?"*^{NKJV} *"But when Peter saw this, he replied to the people, 'as if by our own power or piety we had made him walk?'"*^{NASB} *"as if by our power or virtue we had given him the use of his legs?"*^{BBE} *"as if by our strength or power we had made this man to walk?"*^{DOUAY} *"as though we have made him walk by our own power or godly life?"*^{GWN} *"as if by our own power or authority we had made this man to walk?"*^{MRD} *"Do you think this was done because we are good?"*^{IE} and *"as though by our [own individual] power or [active] piety we had made this man [able] to walk?"*^{AMPLIFIED}

Peter's words are arresting. He questions why the people are looking upon him and John intently as though they had made this man walk by their own *"power or holiness."* That is a most interesting combination of words: *"power or holiness,"* *"power or godliness,"*^{NKJV} *"power or piety,"*^{NASB} or *"power or godly life."*^{GWN}

The word *"power"* comes from a

The amazement of the crowd confirmed they had not seen God in the matter. They saw this as a worldly phenomenon, and did not connect it with the risen Christ, whom they had crucified earlier through the hands of lawless men. Their eyes were fixed upon the result of the Lord working, and not on the working Lord.

healing of the man. After he had leaped up, they simply proceeded into the Temple as they intended.

The amazement of the crowd confirmed they had not seen God in the matter. They saw this as a worldly phenomenon, and did not connect it with the risen Christ, whom they had crucified earlier through the hands of lawless men. Their eyes were fixed upon the result of the Lord working, and not on the working Lord. **Even though they were in the "courts of the Lord," they were not conscious of Him, and therefore could not detect His working.**

All of this was really inexcusable. The Lord Jesus had been among them,

they are witnessed by unregenerate men, great works of God are easily forgotten. Also, the flesh cannot make an association between the hand of God and the circumstances of life. It is simply blind to such associations.

There is also something to be said about God-consciousness versus man-consciousness: i.e. between perceiving God in a matter and only seeing men. One of the fundamental ministries of Jesus is to make us aware of the Living God, His purposes, and His gifts. Being filled with the Spirit, Peter is keenly aware of this. Therefore he sees this circumstance quite differently than the multitudes. This whole matter has interrupted their religion. Now Peter, perceiving their situation, will speak to

When God works by His mighty power, insightful souls can seize the opportunity for His glory – by Given O. Blakely

word meaning, "strength, ability, or power residing in a person," or inherent in their nature, ^{THAYER} "a capacity for something, ability, capability," ^{FRIBERG} "capacity," ^{UBS} "ability to perform a particular activity," ^{LOUW-NIDA} "authority." ^{LEH} As used here, this speaks of a natural ability – resident in, and developed by, human aptitude.

The word "holiness" comes from a word meaning, "piety toward God, godliness," ^{THAYER} "behavior directed dutifully toward God, piety, devotion, godliness," ^{FRIBERG} "godliness, godly life; religion; good deeds or godly living," ^{UBS} and "appropriate beliefs and devout practice of obligations

related to" God. ^{LOUW-NIDA}

Peter is affirming that this man was not made to walk through any natural ability (power) of his own – the art of healing, medicinal expertise, etc. He is also declaring that it was not done because God had given them a special ability because they led disciplined religious lives, keeping all of the rules, and thus becoming worthy of receiving such an aptitude. **These are the two areas law-keepers accentuate: having**

natural gifts, or being rewarded by God for being so good. This power did not come from Peter and John themselves, and it was not given to them because of their excellent works and rule-keeping. Thus, in spiritual wisdom, Peter turns the attention from himself and John. He has "the mind of Christ." He therefore denies that they are superior by birth or by conduct. **What they have done is not owing to their persons or their religious achievements.** The Source was of a higher order than nature.

THE GOD OF ...

^{13a} **The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers . . .**"

Peter will now identify the God of whom He will speak. It will not be the God of the Pharisees, who dealt with men according to their excellence. It will not be the God of the scribes, who was devoted to rules and procedures relating to human conduct. He was not the God of the Sadducees, who governed a realm without spirits or angels. He was not the God of the Lawyers who exalted human understanding above Divine intention. Peter will be very precise in his delineation of God.

THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND OF ISAAC, AND OF JACOB

"The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob . . ." Other versions read, *"The God of Abraham, (the God) of Isaac, and (the God) of Jacob."* ^{NAB}

This is the God who made Himself known to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It is the God who chose them, blessed them, and directed them. It is the God they worshiped, obeyed, and served.

The first person to refer to God as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was God Himself. He used this phrase when appearing to Moses at the burning bush: *"Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to*

look upon God" (Ex 3:6). The Lord instructed Moses to refer to Him in this manner: *"And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent*

caught it, and it became a rod in his hand: that they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee" (Ex 4:4-5).

This is the God who made Himself known to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It is the God who chose them, blessed them, and directed them. It is the God they worshiped, obeyed, and served.

me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations" (Ex 3:15). When Moses told the Israelites God had appeared to him, he was to refer to Him in this manner: *"Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt"* (Ex 3:16). God even gave Moses a special sign to work before the Israelites so they would believe this is the God who sent him: *"And the LORD said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and*

Jesus Christ referred to God in this manner: *"But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living"* (Mat 22:32; Mk 12:26; Lk 20:37). Stephen also referenced to God in this way (Acts 7:37).

Elaborating on this point, Moses reveals how God heard the groaning of Israel under the oppression of the Egyptians and "remembered **His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob**" (Ex 2:24). God also reminded

Moses of His personal appearance to these three patriarchs: ***“And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them”*** (Ex 6:3). The entrance of Israel into the land of promise was owing to a promise God made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: ***“And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am the LORD”*** (Ex 6:8; 33:1; Num 32:11; Deut 1:8; 6:10).

When God promised to enable Israel to drive out the inhabitants of Canaan, ***it was only because of what He had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: “Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that He may perform the word which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob”*** (Deut 9:5).

When Moses pled for God to spare Israel, not destroying them for their wickedness, he did so upon the basis of His commitment to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. ***“Remember Thy servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; look not unto the stubbornness of this people, nor to their wickedness, nor to their sin”*** (Deut 9:27).

When Moses spoke to the people about God establishing them and being a God to them, he reminded them that this was owing to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. ***“That He may establish thee to day for a people unto himself, and that He may be unto thee a God, as He hath said unto thee, and as He hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob”*** (Deut 29:13).

God revealed to Moses that Israel would depart from Him, and be punished by Him. Yet, if they would repent and turn to Him, even in their captivity, He promised ***“Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land”*** (Lev 26:42).

During their history, when God was gracious to Israel, having compassion on them, it was because of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. ***“And the LORD was gracious unto them, and had compassion on them, and had respect unto them, because of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them, neither cast He them from His presence as yet”*** (2 Kgs 13:23).

An Application

All of this provides insight into the nature of salvation. ***With Israel, they were blessed because of others (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob), and not because of their own persons or achievements.*** How could they boast in such a circumstance? They were sustained because of a covenant made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Likewise, the saved are not blessed because of themselves, but because of Christ Jesus. Strictly speaking, they are not blessed because they have obeyed, but because of the Son of God. God has forgiven them *“for*

Whatever you may think of God’s love for you, His love for Jesus is greater! He is the *“beloved Son,”* and, when we have *“received Him”* (John 1:12), we are blessed because of that. **I am not sure that it is proper to continually speak of how much God loves people.** There certainly are not a lot of examples of this kind of speaking in Scripture. Further, when the love of God toward men is mentioned, it is not on a sentimental or emotional level. **God’s love is associated with purpose, not mere attraction.**

⇒ *“For God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life”* (John 3:16).

⇒ *“But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”* (Rom 5:8).

⇒ *“Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give: not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver”* (2 Cor 9:7).



Christ’s sake” (Eph 4:32). It is the Father’s love for Christ that has brought the blessing to us (John 15:9), and the Father loves us because we love His Son. ***“For the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God”*** (John 16:27).

⇒ *“But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in*

Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” (Eph 2:4-7).

- ⇨ *“Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath **given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace**” (2 Thess 2:16).*
- ⇨ *“But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man **appeared**” (Titus 3:4).*
- ⇨ *“For whom the Lord loveth **He chasteneth**, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth” (Heb 12:6).*
- ⇨ *“Behold, **what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God**” (1 John 3:1).*
- ⇨ *“In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, **that we might live through Him**” (1 John 4:9).*
- ⇨ *“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and **sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins**” (1 John 4:10).*
- ⇨ *“**We love him, because He first loved us**” (1 John 4:19).*
- ⇨ *“And from Jesus Christ, who is the Faithful Witness, and the First Begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth. Unto Him that loved us, and **washed us from our sins in His own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen**” (Rev 1:5-6).*

Nowhere is God represented as desiring to be a part of our life, or earnestly wanting to bless us because He loves us so much. Thoughts pertaining to the love of God are crafted much more carefully than that. **Men are never left with the thought that there is so much as a spark of Divine love or concern toward them that is not strictly because of Christ Jesus.**

Further Development

Like Peter, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob could claim no personal power or holiness as the basis of the Divine favor they experienced. Abraham came from an idolatrous background (Josh 24:2). Isaac had a supernatural birth (Gen 17:15-19; 21:12), and was the Divinely determined seed (Gal 4:28). Jacob also was conceived by Divine intervention (Gen 25:21), and was chosen above his older twin brother Esau before they were born (Gen 25:22-23; Mal 1:2-3; Rom 9:11-13).

Peter and John were also chosen by Jesus. The Lord Himself reminded them that they did not choose Him. **“Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit**

should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, He may give it you” (John 15:16).

Ultimately, all blessing is traced back to the Son of God. Even in the case of Abraham, it was his Seed, Christ Jesus, who was the cause for Divine beneficence. **For those who are in Christ, Jesus Himself is the reason for them being received and blessed.** Nothing that they received through their flesh and blood lineage – Adam – brought the blessing to them! Contrary to the statements of some, the secret to blessing is not obedience, and it is not praise. **It is Jesus Himself, and our only association with Him is our faith – and even it came from God,** as Peter will affirm in this very passage.

THE GOD OF OUR FATHERS

“... the God of our fathers . . . ”
Other versions read, *“the God of our ancestors,”* ^{NRSV} *“the God of our forefathers,”* ^{NET} *“the God of all our ancestors,”* ^{NLT} *“and of all our ancestors,”* ^{LIVING} and *“the same God of all our ancestors.”* ^{IE}

Here, the expression “our fathers” is not a repetition of “Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” This rather refers to the mass of the Israelites who had trusted in God. The word “fathers” is frequently used in this sense.

⇨ *“But after that **our fathers** had provoked the God of heaven unto wrath, he gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, the Chaldean, who destroyed this house, and carried the people away*

Nowhere is God represented as desiring to be a part of our life, or earnestly wanting to bless us because He loves us so much. Thoughts pertaining to the love of God are crafted much more carefully than that. Men are never left with the thought that there is so much as a spark of Divine love or concern toward them that is not strictly because of Christ Jesus.

into Babylon” (Ezra 5:12).

- ⇨ *“**Our fathers** understood not thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies; but provoked him at the sea, even at the Red sea” (Psa 106:7).*
- ⇨ *“**Our fathers** did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat” (John 6:31).*
- ⇨ *“**Our fathers** had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen” (Acts 7:44).*
- ⇨ *“And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that*

Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto **our fathers**. Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive” (Acts 28:25-26).

⇒ “Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all **our fathers** were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea” (1 Cor 10:1).

Why Did Peter Speak In This Manner?

Peter does not speak of the God of the human race, or all men, although He is “the Father of spirits” (Heb 12:9) and “the God of all flesh” (Jer 32:27). By referring to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the God of our fathers, Peter is distinguishing the God who had revealed Himself to a selected, or chosen, people. He is also distinguishing Him from the idols of the nations.

God had spoken and revealed Himself to other people – Abimelech (Gen 20:3-6), Balaam (Num 22:20), Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 2:45), Cyrus (2 Chron 36:23), etc. **But He was not the God of Abimelech, or of Balaam, or of Nebuchadnezzar, or of Cyrus.** His covenant of blessing was not through them, and they were not in the Messianic lineage. God was, in a very special sense, “the God of the Hebrews” (Ex 3:16; 5:3; ; 7:16; 9:1,13; 10:3), and “the God of Israel” (Josh 7:13; Judges 4:6; 1 Sam 1:17; 1 Kgs 1:13; Psa41:13).

Peter is going to affirm that the same God who called Abraham, and confirmed His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, is the God who sent and raised Jesus of Nazareth from the dead.

Something to Be Learned

There is a lesson to be learned here concerning our perspective of Scripture. **Some, who are unlearned, speak of the God of the Old Testament, and the God of the New Testament.** Even those who acknowledge One God often represent Him as being quite different prior to and during the Old Covenant – more harsh and less tolerant than He is in this day of salvation.

All of this is nothing more than

purpose was to clearly identify sin, convincing men of both its nature and dominance. In this way, it prepare the people for a Savior. In fact, the Gospel is said to have been “preached . . . unto Abraham” (Gal 3:8).

Some might imagine that the Law was meaningless, and completely disassociated from the promise made to Abraham. Thus it is written, “Wherefore then serveth the law? It was **added**

He does not refer to the creation of “the worlds” (Heb 1:2; 11:3). He does not refer to the creation of man (Gen 2:7). He does not refer to the institution of marriage (Gen 1:27; 5:2). He does not refer to the giving of the Law (Ex 20:1-17). He does not even refer to the occupation of the promised land by Israel (Josh 21:43). All of these were magnificent works, but none of them were sufficient to redeem men.

fleshly nonsense, borne out of a gross ignorance of God Himself. **Technically, the New Covenant is really the oldest one, having been promised to Abraham.** Thus Paul writes, “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that **the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect**” (Gal 3:16-17). The covenant that is fulfilled in Christ is said to be **before** the Law, which was given four hundred and thirty years later at Mount Sinai. **The Law was a sort of interlude between the promise of salvation through the Seed of Abraham and its actual fulfilment.** Its

because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made . . . Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law . . . But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe” (Gal 3:19-22).

Now Peter will masterfully declare Jesus Christ to be the **One through whom the promises of God are fulfilled, and in whom faith must be placed.** This Anointed One has been approved by the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the fathers, and all Israel – the same God they professed to follow..

GOD HATH GLORIFIED HIS SON

^{13b} . . . **hath glorified His Son Jesus.**”

Having established the God of whom he is speaking, Peter now declares

His work. He **does** not refer to the creation of “the worlds” (Heb 1:2; 11:3). He does **not** refer to the creation of man (Gen 2:7). He does **not** refer to the institution of marriage (Gen 1:27; 5:2).

He does **not** refer to the giving of the Law (Ex 20:1-17). He **does** not even refer to the occupation of the promised land by Israel (Josh 21:43). **All of these were magnificent works, but none of them**

were sufficient to redeem men. Hence, such things cannot be the emphasis of preaching, for none of them is Gospel, and the Gospel is “the power of God unto salvation” (Rom 1:16). Suffice it to say, any preaching or teaching that **emphasizes** the world, man, marriage, the keeping of the Law, or blessedness in this world cannot possibly be true.

HATH GLORIFIED

“ . . . hath glorified . . . ” Other versions read, “has given glory,”^{ASV} “has brought glory,”^{NLT} “did glorify,”^{YLT} “He gave glory,”^{IE} “has conferred this honor,”^{WEYMOUTH} “has glorified . . . [doing Him this honor],”^{AMPLIFIED} “who has done this thing to honor,”^{PHILLIPS} and “has given Divine glory.”^{GNB}

Peter refers to something that God has already accomplished – “hath,” or “given,”^{ASV} “did,”^{YLT} or “conferred,”^{WEYMOUTH} **This not something God**

“ . . . His Son Jesus.” Other versions read, “His servant Jesus,”^{NKJV} “His child Jesus,”^{YLT} and “to Jesus,”^{His Servant and Son Jesus.}^{AMPLIFIED}

“Son” Versus “Servant”

Nearly all later translations say “Servant” instead of “Son”^{NKJV, NASB, NIV, NRSV, RSV, ASV, BBE, CSB DARBY, ERV, ESV, GWN, NAB, NAS, NAU, NET, NIB, NJB, NLT, LIVING, IE, WEYMOUTH, ISV, WILLIAMS, and MONTGOMERY.} Two of the literal translations (Young’s Literal and Literal Translation of the Bible) translate the word “child.” The Amplified Bible translates it “Servant and Son.”

The Greek word translated “Son” and “servant” is common in all Greek manuscripts. It is παῖδά (pie-dah), and is in the masculine gender. Its lexical meaning is “a child,” with the second usage “servant, slave,”^{THAYER} “in reference to age, child; in reference to descent son, in reference to social

Son (Servant) **JESUS.**”

First, this precise Greek word is used five times in Scripture. Luke 9:42 (“child,”^{KJV} “boy”^{NASB}), Acts 3:13 (“Son,”^{KJV} “Servant,”^{ASV} “Child”^{YLT}), Acts 3:26 (“Son,”^{KJV} “Servant,”^{ASV} “Child,”^{YLT}), Acts 4:27 (“Child,”^{KJV} “Servant,”^{ASV} “Child.”^{DOUAY}), and Acts 20:12 (“young man” named Eutychus, “lad,”^{ASV} “youth,”^{DOUAY} “boy.”^{NASB}

There can be no question about Jesus being God’s Servant. That is how Isaiah spoke of the coming Messiah (Isa 42:1; 49:5-7; 50:10; 52:13; 53:11). Zechariah also prophesied of the Messiah as God’s “Servant the Branch” (Zech 3:8). Matthew specifically confirms Jesus is the “Servant” of Isaiah’s prophecy (Matt 12:16). **None of these prophecies had to do with the exaltation or glorification of Jesus.** They rather had to do with Him carrying out God’s commission in the earth – accomplishing salvation.

I affirm that, from a technical point of view, Jesus was exalted in the capacity of the Son of God. In this capacity He is the Foundation upon which the church is Built (Matt 16:16-18; 1 Cor 3:11). Our faith involves a persuasion that Jesus is “the Son of God” (John 20:21; Acts 8:37; 1 John 5:5). The text loses nothing by retaining the expression “He Hath glorified His Son Jesus.”^{KJV, DOUAY, GENEVA, MRD, PNT, RWB, TNT, WEB, BISHOP’S BIBLE, MKJV}

The Glorification

The glorification of Jesus involved His exaltation above all others, and the conferment of “all power in heaven and earth” (Matt 28:18). This all has to do with Him being a Man – the “Son of God.” **He is, beyond all question, the preeminent Man through whom salvation is realized.** Various expressions of that exaltation are as follows.

- ⇨ He is “by the right hand of God exalted” (Acts 2:33).
- ⇨ God has exalted Him “with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins” (Acts 5:31).
- ⇨ God has “set Him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far

If this word was used to describe anyone other than Jesus, I would carry the matter no further. However, since this is descriptive of Jesus, it seems to me that we must extend ourselves to be sure we hold a God-honoring view of the term.

observed, but something He executed. It was not a joint enterprise, but something achieved by His “own arm” (Isa 63:5).

The accomplishment was glorification – a Person was “glorified.” The word “glorified” comes from the Greek word ἐδόξασεν (the aorist active tense of δοξάζω – that is, **it is an action that has already been accomplished.** The word itself means “to praise, extol, magnify . . . to honor, hold in honor . . . restore to a state of glory,”^{THAYER} “as giving or sharing a high status,”^{FRIBERG} “magnify,”^{LEH} and “to clothe in splendor.”^{GINGRICH}

This is not something man does. It is the work of God Himself. It is not glory after the manner of men, who cannot actually invest anyone with glory. It is not mere talk, but the conferment of a high status that can be confirmed by a public showing.

HIS SON JESUS

position servant, slave,”^{FRIBERG} “servant, slave, child,”^{UBS} “a young person,”^{LOUW-NIDA} “in relation to Descent, a son, in Relation to age, a child, in relation to Condition, a slave, servant,”^{LIDDELL-SCOTT} “child (in relation to parents,”^{LEH} and “boy, son, but even more probable is servant, slave.”^{GINGRICH}

It is clear from the lexical definitions that the meaning of the word is not cut and dried. It is used in a number of differing ways to denote age, descent, and social status. If this word was used to describe anyone other than Jesus, I would carry the matter no further. **However, since this is descriptive of Jesus, it seems to me that we must extend ourselves to be sure we hold a God-honoring view of the term.**

The complicating factor is the words modified by this expression: “His

above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church” (Eph 1:20-22).

- ⇒ God has “highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name”(Phil 2:9).
- ⇒ Jesus Has “gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him”(1 Pet 3:22).

Thus it is stated that God “hath glorified His Son Jesus”(Acts 3:13). That is, now he is clearly “the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords”(1 Tim 6:15). He is no longer in a humbled state, as He was in this world, nor is He in the “form of a servant”(Phil 2:7-8). He is no longer “in all points tempted as we are”(Heb 4:15).

This glorification of Jesus took place after His death and resurrection. Jesus prayed about this in the garden prior to His betrayal. “These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come;

glorify Thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify Thee . . . And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was”(John 17:1,5).

Just as Christ’s entrance into the world as a man concealed who He really was, so His glorification reveals who He really is.

Now, Peter will contrast what God has done with Jesus with what the Jews did to Him. As we would expect, he will do so in a powerful and uncompromising manner. His words will take the form of an affirmation.

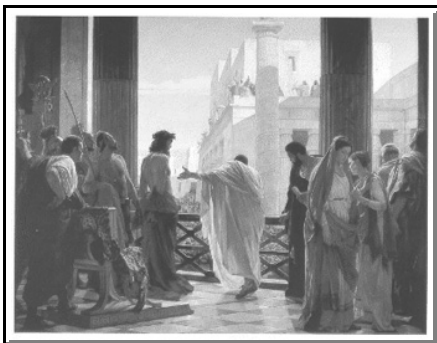
YOU DELIVERED AND DENIED HIM

^{13c} . . . **whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go.”**

What will religious men who reject Christ do when given the license to do so? With whom will they form an alliance? How far will they go in their opposition to Jesus? **Man may speculate about this matter, but there certainly is no need to do so.** God has given us the account of what men will do to Jesus when all restraint is removed.

YOU DELIVERED UP

“. . . whom ye delivered up . . .” Other versions read, “You handed Him over,”^{NIV} “whom you handed over,”^{NRSV} “whom you gave up,”^{BBE} “whom you indeed delivered up,”^{DOUAY} “you delivered over,”^{ESV} “whom ye betrayed,”^{GENEVA} and “you handed Jesus over.”^{IE}



When we read of Jesus praying, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do”(Lk 23:34), we must take care not to form a false conclusion. **This does not mean our Lord was indifferent to what the covenanted people were doing.** His desire for the Father to forgive them was not the expression of a sentimental attitude. Rather, it was the result of His keen awareness of God’s covenant to them, when He will “take away their sins”(Rom 11:27).

Thus Peter, speaking again while filled with the Spirit, reminds the people that they had delivered up Jesus to the State – to take His life as though He was a criminal instead of a Savior. Therefore it is written, “And when they had bound Him, they led Him away, and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate the governor”(Matt 27:2). Verily, Isaiah had spoken the truth concerning them: “He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him”(Isa 53:2).

If you wonder what sin can move a people to do, we have a sterling example of such conduct in the Jews handing Jesus over to Pilate.

The zeal with which the Jews carried out their hatred against Jesus is remarkable to consider. Their efforts extended throughout the night, and well

into the next day. A brief outline of that period is provided in the box below.

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS
JEWISH OFFICERS ARREST HIM IN GETHSEMANE
 Matt 26:47-56

BOUND AND LED TO ANNAS
 John 18:12-13

ANNAS SENDS HIM TO CAIAPHAS
 John 18:24

EXAMINED BEFORE CAIAPHAS ALL NIGHT
 (Matt 26:57-75; Mk 14:53-72; Lk 22:54-62; John 18:13-21; 24-27)

TRIED BY THE JEWISH COUNCIL
 Lk 22:66-71

BOUND AND LED TO PILATE
 Matt 27:1-2, 11-14; Mk 15:1-5; Lk 23:1-5; John 18:28-38.

PILATE ORDERS HIM SENT TO HEROD
 Lk 23:6-11

HEROD, SENDS HIM BACK TO PILATE
 Luke 23:12-13

TRIED BY PILATE
 Matt 27:15-26; Mk 15:6-15; Lk 23:13-25; John 18:39-19:16

Ponder what the Jews themselves did with and to Jesus **before** they delivered Him to Pilate. Their actions were involved in delivering Him up.

- ⇒ They came to arrest Him, armed with swords and clubs (Matt 26:47).

When God works by His mighty power, insightful souls can seize the opportunity for His glory – by Given O. Blakely

- ⇨ They “*laid their hands on Jesus, and took Him*” (Matt 26:50).
- ⇨ They bound Him and took Him to Annas (John 18:12).
- ⇨ They “*sought false witness against Jesus, to put Him to death*” (Matt 26:59).
- ⇨ Many volunteered, lying about Jesus, yet they could not agree in their lies (Mk 14:56).
- ⇨ When Jesus declared His words had been public, an officer struck Him (John 18:22).
- ⇨ They “*spit in His face, buffeted Him*” and “*smote Him with the palms of their hands*” (Matt 26:57).
- ⇨ They “*blindfolded Him*” (Lk 22:64).
- ⇨ They challenged Him to prophesy who had struck Him (Matt 26:68).
- ⇨ They spoke “*many other things blasphemously*” against Him (Lk 22:65).
- ⇨ They again bound Him and led Him to Pilate (Matt 27:2).
- ⇨ When taking Him to Pilate “*they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover*” (John 18:28).

Do you wonder what rejecting Jesus can lead a person to do? Ponder to what extent people – religious people – will go to justify their rejection of Jesus! When Peter charged the people with delivering up Jesus, all of these actions were covered. That included their aggressive arrest of Jesus, even after the arresting multitude drew back and fell on the ground after hearing Jesus say, “*I am He!*” (John 18:4-6).

These were the people who fulfilled the words of the prophet Isaiah: “*I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not My face from shame and spitting*” (Isa 50:6).

YOU DENIED HIM IN THE

PRESENCE OF PILATE

“ . . . and denied Him in the presence of Pilate . . .” Other versions read, “*disowned in the presence of Pilate,*” ^{NASB} “*disowned Him before Pilate,*” ^{NIV} “*rejected in the presence of Pilate,*” ^{NRSV} “*denied before the face of Pilate,*” ^{ASV} “*turning your backs on Him,*” ^{BBE} “*rejected Him in Pilate’s presence,*” ^{GWN} “*denied and rejected and disowned in the presence of Pilate,*” ^{AMPLIFIED} and “*denied [or, disowned] Him to [the] face of [fig., in the presence of] Pilate.*” ^{ALT}

The actions of the Jews before Pilate were utterly despicable. They revealed how hardened the people were in hearts, and how calloused their consciences had become.

- ⇨ The chief priests and elders accused Jesus “*of many things*” before Pilate (Mk 15:3).

The actions of the Jews before Pilate were utterly despicable. They revealed how hardened the people were in hearts, and how calloused their consciences had become.

- ⇨ They charged Jesus with “*perverting the nation*” (Lk 23:2a).
- ⇨ They said had found Jesus “*forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that He Himself is king*” (Lk 23:2).
- ⇨ They said He stirred up the people, teaching throughout Jewry, beginning at Galilee to the place occupied by Pilate (Lk 23:5).
- ⇨ They charged him with being “*a malefactor,*” or evildoer, ^{NKJV} or criminal.” ^{NIV}
- ⇨ They said it was not lawful for them to put a man to death, demanding that Pilate do so (John 18:31).

In all of this, Pilate was unmoved, for “*he knew that for envy they had delivered Him up*” (Matt 27:18; Mk

15:10). After a preliminary hearing Pilate said, “*I find no fault in this man*” (Lk 23:4).

Yet, the Jews, filled with hatred, and intent on ridding themselves of Jesus, pressed Pilate in their quest to have Jesus killed.

HE WAS DETERMINED TO LET HIM GO

“ . . . when he was determined to let him go.” Other versions read, “*when he had decided to release Him,*” ^{NASB} “*though he had decided to let Him go,*” ^{NIV} “*when Pilate had made the decision to let him go free,*” ^{BBE} “*when he had judged that He should be let go,*” ^{DARBY} “*when he would have justified Him and set Him free,*” ^{MKD} “*after he had given his verdict to release Him,*” ^{NJB} “*when he had judged Him to be loosed,*” ^{PNT} “*he having given judgment to release Him,*” ^{YLT} and “*despite Pilate’s determination to release*

Him.” ^{LIVING}

Pilate’s words on this matter were strong and to the point. “*Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him: No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him. I will therefore chastise him, and release him*” (Luke 23:16). He had, then, made a determination to release Jesus, not being able to find any cause of death in Him. All of this was accentuated by a special message Pilate had received from his wife: “*Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him*” (Matt 27:19).

The Jew’s response is recorded, and it is dreadful to consider, for it

reveals what a person in the grip of Satan can do. "And they cried out at once saying, Away with this man!" (Matt 27:18).

Today, if the real Jesus were being made known – being preached to the people with discernment and power –

perhaps some who presently appear to have confessed Him would really reject Him!

YOU DESIRED A MURDERER AND KILLED THE PRINCE OF LIFE

"¹⁴ But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; ¹⁵ And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses."

Peter is unrelenting in pressing the guilt of his listeners upon them. He knows that if they are going to be extricated from their iniquity, they will have to be more intent than they were in their opposition to and killing of Jesus.

YOU DENIED THE HOLY ONE AND THE JUST ONE

"But ye denied the Holy One and the Just . . ." Other versions read, "But you disowned the Holy and Righteous One,"^{NASB} "You rejected the man who was holy and innocent,"^{GWN} "But you rejected

Jesus, yet the people rejected Him. That is, they rejected Him because of who He said He was. The High Priest had asked Him, "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" (Mark 14:61). When Jesus responded, "I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Mark 14:62), His words were rejected: "Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death" (Mark 14:63-64).

Now, before Pilate, when asked if they desired Jesus to be released, they rejected the offer saying, "Let Him be crucified" (Matt 27:22). When Pilate remonstrated, they insisted all the more:

" . . . and desired a murderer to be granted unto you . . ." Other versions read, "and asked for a murderer to be granted to you,"^{NASB} "and asked that a murderer be released to you,"^{NIV} "and made request for a man of blood to be given to you,"^{BBE} "You asked to have a murderer given to you,"^{GWN} "and demanded that a murderer should be released to you,"^{MRD} "Instead, you demanded the release of a murderer,"^{LIVING} "You told Pilate to give you a murderer instead of Jesus,"^{IE} "you asked as a favor the release of a murderer,"^{WEYMOUTH} "you asked a murderer to be pardoned as a favor to you,"^{WILLIAMS} "and demanded [the pardon of] a murderer to be granted to you,"^{AMPLIFIED} "and begged to be granted instead a man who was a murderer!"^{PHILLIPS} and "and instead you asked Pilate to do you the favor of turning loose a murderer."^{GNB}

Although they could not get any witnesses to make a legitimate charge against Jesus, and even though Pilate himself had affirmed he found no fault in Jesus, yet the people rejected Him. That is, they rejected Him because of who He said He was.

the Holy and Righteous One,"^{NET} "It was you who accused the Holy and Upright One,"^{NJB} "You didn't want Him freed – this holy, righteous One,"^{LIVING} "Jesus was holy and innocent, but you said you didn't want Him,"^{IE} and "But you denied and rejected and disowned the Pure and Holy, the Just and Blameless One."^{AMPLIFIED}

Although they could not get any witnesses to make a legitimate charge against Jesus, and even though Pilate himself had affirmed he found no fault in

"And the governor said, **Why, what evil hath he done?** But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified" (Matt 27:23). They "denied the Holy One and the Just One," insisting that He was worthy of death. None could find any evil or sin in Jesus. Annas could not. Caiaphas could not. The Jewish council could not. The false witnesses could not. Herod could not. And now, Pilate does not. Yet, the people denied Jesus was holy and righteous.

YOU DESIRED A MURDERER

Pilate had made an effort to reach the sensitivity of the people. He knew it was the Passover, and that it was customary for the Jews to ask for the release of a Jewish prisoner at that time. It is written, "But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?" (John 18:39). Matthew tells us that Pilate was accustomed to release a prisoner at this particular time, and would therefore do so. "Now at that feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would" (Matt 27:15). Luke says, "For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast" (Luke 23:17). **This was the politically expedient thing to do.**

At that time, a well-known Jewish prisoner was being held – "a notable prisoner, called Barabbas" (Matt 27:16). He had caused a political insurrection in the city, and had even committed murder: "Who for a certain sedition made

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in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison” (Luke 23:19). We are also told, “Now Barabbas was a robber” (John 18:40).

In an effort to reach the people, Pilate first abused Jesus, then presented Him to the people in an effort to touch their sympathy. “Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him. And the soldiers **platted a crown of thorns, and put it on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe, and said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote Him with their hands.** Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring Him forth to you, **that ye may know that I find no fault in Him.** Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, **Behold the man!**” (John 19:1-5).

I do not know precisely how the Lord appeared before the people, but it must not have been a comely sight, for He had been “scourged,” or “flogged,”^{NIV} had been pummeled, and had a crown of thorns pushed upon His head. Yet, “When the chief priests therefore and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, Crucify Him, crucify Him” (John 19:6). As for Barabbas the insurrectionist, murderer, and thief, they “cried out all at once, saying, Away with this Man, and release unto us Barabbas” (Luke 23:18). Matthew says of this, “When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. Then answered **all the people**, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children” (Matt 27:24-25).

When Pilate told the people, “Take ye Him, and crucify Him: for I find no fault in Him” (John 19:6), the people replied, “We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because He made himself the Son of God” (John 19:7). Upon hearing this, Pilate “was the more afraid.” Again he went into the judgment hall and examined Jesus asking Jesus where He came from. After Jesus failed to reply, Pilate asked Jesus if He knew who Pilate was, and of the power he possessed. Jesus replied, “Thou couldst have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he

that delivered Me unto thee hath the greater sin” (John 19:9-11).

Pilate then made a valiant effort to release Jesus, leaving no stone unturned – at least as far as he was concerned. However, his efforts were met with the reply of the people, “If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar’s friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar” (John 19:12).

Pilate then brought Jesus forth, and himself sat down in “the judgment seat,” where final determinations were made. Knowing it was the time of the Passover, he cried out to the people, “Behold your king!” The people replied, “Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him!” Refusing to yield, Pilate said, “Shall I crucify your king?” With the venom of asps dripping from their lips the people responded, “We have no king but Caesar.” Then Pilate delivered Him unto them “to be crucified” (John 18:13-

Originator of life,^{NET} “and so, you killed *the One who gives life,*^{IE} “*The Pioneer of life you put to death,*^{MONTGOMERY} “but you killed *the very Source (the Author) of life,*^{AMPLIFIED} and “*You killed the One who leads to life.*^{GNB}

Here is the ultimate murder – killing “the Prince of life.” The word “Prince” has a lexical meaning of, “author . . . the chief leader . . . the one who takes the lead,”^{THAYER} “the one who causes something to begin, originator, founder, initiator,”^{FRIBERG} “beginning, originating a thing, a prince, chief, a first cause, originator,”^{LIDDELL-SCOTT} “leader, ruler, prince, or originator, founder,”^{GINGRICH}

The antithesis of their request is **staggering: they requested Pilate to release a murderer, and killed the Prince of life!** Jesus is, indeed, the Source of life. Thus we read, “**In Him was life; and the life was the light of men**” (John 1:4). And again, “**For the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth**

Philosophically, one might reason that it was impossible to take the life of the “Prince of life” – the One who Himself is the Author of life. However, when we consider that Jesus laid down His life of Himself, and that He came into the world to “give His life a ransom for many,” it becomes apparent why such a thing was possible.

16).
You see, then, with what **determination the people delivered Jesus to Pilate and demanded His death.** There was nothing casual about their efforts. They barged past obstacle and obstacle, insisting that Jesus was worthy of death, and should therefore die.

YOU KILLED THE PRINCE OF LIFE

“ . . . And killed the Prince of life . . . ” Other versions read, “and put to death the Prince of life,”^{NASB} “You killed *the Author of life,*^{NIV} “and put to death *the Lord of life,*^{BBE} “and you killed *the Source of life,*^{CSB} “You killed *the*

life unto the world” (John 6:33). Barabbas took away life, Jesus gives it – and the Jews chose Barabbas over Jesus! By way of contrast, Jesus said, “*For the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them*” (Luke 9:56). Again He said, “*The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly*” (John 10:10). **By comparison Barabbas was both a thief and a killer – yet the Jews preferred him to Jesus!**

Philosophically, one might reason that it was impossible to take the life of the “Prince of life” – the One who Himself is the Author of life. However, when we

consider that Jesus laid down His life of Himself (John 10:17), and that He came into the world to “give His life a ransom for many” (Matt 10:28; Mk 10:45), it becomes apparent why such a thing was possible.

Yet, this circumstance did not absolve its perpetrators from their guilt. If people are wicked enough to be used to carry our such deeds, none of them can say to God, “Why hast Thou made me thus?” (Rom 9:20). Indeed, these people could not charge that God made them do this – even though it was because of God’s determinate counsel and foreknowledge that Jesus was delivered up (Acts 2:23). **God used them because they were wicked – they were not wicked because God used them.** In fact, they proved to be worse than Judas, who himself was a “devil” (John 6:70). He confessed, “I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood” (Matt 27:4) – and that was **before** Jesus died! But these people made no such confession. In fact, they extended themselves to kill “the Prince of life,” barging over repeated obstacles that were thrown in their path.

Peter will make no room for them making a mistake, or acting hastily. They did the deed in ignorance, but they

DEAD

“... whom God hath raised from the dead . . .” Other versions read, “whom God gave back from the dead,”^{BBE} “But God brought him back to life,”^{GWN} “God, however, raised him from the dead,”^{NJB} “whom God did raise out of the dead,”^{YLT} and “but God raised Him from death.”^{IE}

From the standpoint of those hearing Peter, Christ’s resurrection was a Divine reversal of their verdict, which proved they were wrong. From Christ’s standpoint, His resurrection was the confirmation that God had received His atoning death as a just basis for the remission of sins. From our viewpoint, His resurrection validates that He is, in fact, the Son of God with power.

“The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” is the One who raised Jesus from the dead. **Although the people had claimed identity with the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, they had developed and maintained an entirely different view of Jesus of Nazareth than He did.** God had publicly “approved” of Jesus by means of “miracles, signs, and wonders” (2:22). Yet, in the hardness of their hearts, they had not only rejected Jesus, but “killed Him.” Now, by raising

saw Him alive,”^{LIVING} “We saw this with our own eyes,”^{IE} and “a fact of which we are eye-witnesses.”^{PHILLIPS}

The confirmation of resurrection was the life that followed. Although none of the Apostles, or anyone else, witnessed the resurrection itself, they had seen, talked with, and handled the risen Christ. Paul gives an account of the appearances of Christ following His resurrection. “And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: and that he was seen of **Cephas**, then of **the twelve**: after that, he was seen of **above five hundred brethren at once**; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of **James**: then of **all the apostles**. And last of all he was seen of **me also**, as of one born out of due time” (1 Cor 15:4-8). Later, Peter will give an account of Christ’s post-resurrection appearances to Cornelius and his household: “Him God raised up the third day, and showed Him openly; Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead” (Acts 10:40-41).

With such a host of witnesses, it would be futile to affirm that Jesus had not risen from the dead. Literally hundreds of eye witnesses would strike down such an affirmation.

An Application

There is a principle to be seen here. The confirmation of Christ’s resurrection was found in His post-resurrection life, not in the witness of the resurrection itself. It is the same with those who are “risen with Christ” (Col 3:1). No man actually witnesses this resurrection “with Christ.” **The proof is found in the life that follows.**

This is the reasoning employed in the sixth chapter of Romans. **Being raised with Christ takes place in our baptism, but baptism itself is not the proof of that resurrection.** The life that follows will confirm or deny the reality of being “risen with Christ” (Colo 3:1).

⇒ “Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ

The confirmation of resurrection was the life that followed. Although none of the Apostles, or anyone else, witnessed the resurrection itself, they had seen, talked with, and handled the risen Christ.

did not do it unwillingly. They stooped beneath Pilate, who acknowledged He could find no fault in Him. But their conscience was not pricked by his acknowledgment. Instead, they trumped up lies against Jesus, and hurled false accusations at Him. Now, Peter faces them with their willing and intentional deed, **for sin must be acknowledged before it can be forgiven!**

GOD RAISED HIM FROM THE

Jesus from the dead, God has exposed their folly, and condemned their malicious deed.

WE ARE WITNESSES

“... whereof we are witnesses.” Other versions read, “of which we are witnesses,”^{NKJV} “a fact to which we are witnesses,”^{NASB} “to this we are witnesses,”^{NRSV} “and we are witnesses of fact,”^{NLT} “And John and I are witnesses of this fact, for after you killed Him we

was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should **walk in newness of life**" (Rom 6:4).

⇒ "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, **that henceforth we should not serve sin**" (Rom 6:6).

⇒ "For he that is dead is **freed from sin**" (Rom 6:7).

⇒ "Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also **live with Him**" (Rom 6:8).

⇒ "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but **alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord**" (Rom 6:11).

⇒ "**Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body**, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof" (Rom 6:12).

⇒ "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: **but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God**" (Rom 6:13).

⇒ "Being then made free from sin, ye

A person or a church that lacks holiness, or is not obviously living to the Lord, should make no mention of baptism. Such people are a living contradiction of baptism, bearing no evidence that they have been raised with Christ. An unholy church contradicts the very purpose of God (Eph 5:27), and therefore can make no claim to having the life of Christ!

became **the servants of righteousness**" (Rom 6:18).

⇒ "I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now **yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness**" (Rom 6:19).

⇒ "But now being made free from sin, and **become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life**" (Rom 6:22).

A person or a church that lacks holiness, or is not obviously living to the Lord, should make no mention of baptism. Such people are a living contradiction of baptism, bearing no evidence that they have been raised with

Christ. An unholy church contradicts the very purpose of God (Eph 5:27), and therefore can make no claim to having the life of Christ! **Ungodliness, worldliness, carnality, and the likes, confirm the ABSENCE of life, not its presence.** These are attributes of death, not life. They are the result of rejecting Christ, not accepting Him.

Preferences

It also ought to be noted that when men have preferences other than Christ Himself, they will eventually oppose Christ. **That opposition has no known boundaries.** In our text, it drove men to kill "*the Prince of life.*"

Later in this book, this relentless opposition will compel men to persecute and even kill the messengers sent out by Jesus as well.

FAITH, FAITH, AND FAITH

"¹⁶ **And His name through faith in His name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by Him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.**"

With great strength Peter presses Jesus Christ upon the people. He will not be diverted to other considerations. They "*killed the Prince of life,*" and God raised Him up. Now, with great insight and power, Peter will show the relationship of Jesus Christ to the miracle the people have just witnessed. As he speaks to them, the proof, or evidence, of the power of Christ is standing with himself and John – a former lame beggar, who was well known to the multitude.

HIS NAME

"And His name . . ." Other versions read, "*in the name of Jesus,*"^{NIV} "*the one named Jesus,*"^{GWN} "*in Jesus' name,*"^{NET} "*Jesus' name,*"^{LIVING} "*the authority of Jesus,*"^{IE} "*It is His name,*"^{WEYMOUTH} "*It is the name of this same Jesus,*"^{PHILLIPS} and "*it is the power of His name.*"^{GNB}

I do not know why men wax so academic when they refer to "*the name of Jesus.*" For some, this refers to a formula, as though there was some mystical power released when the name is mentioned. For others, it speaks of authority, like "in the name of the king." It is true that there is an element of truth in these approaches, but it certainly comes far short of the potency

that is proclaimed.

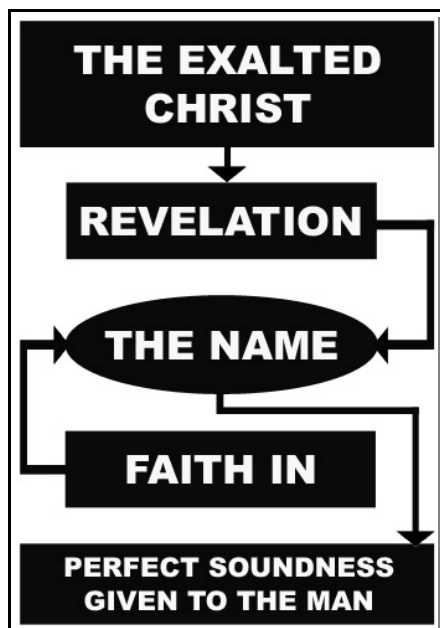
"*The name of Jesus*" speaks of His Person – more specifically, of the **recognition** of His Person. If the person does not actually bear the qualities that are declared in "*the name,*" there is no power in the utterance of that name. Therefore we read of the name of Jesus, "*Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given Him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*" (Phil 2:9-11). This is a name that God Himself has "*given*" to Jesus. This is not a reference to His birth, when His name was "*called*

Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins" (Matt 1:21). The Philippian text refers to the **exaltation** of Jesus, after He had taken away the sins of the world.

There was a sense in which personalities bowed to Jesus even when He was enfleshed among men. An unclean spirit inhabiting a man in a local synagogue once cried out, "Let us alone; what have we to do with Thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art Thou come to destroy us? I know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God" (Mark 1:24). **That spirit recognized who Jesus was, although men did not.** However, now that Jesus has been exalted, wherever men **know** they are being exposed to Him, they bow to Him. Ultimately, "every eye shall see Him" (Rev 1:7), and thus "every knee shall bow" before Him (Rom 14:11).

When Jesus was on the earth, He was veiled by the flesh – concealed beneath a body of flesh and blood. However, this is not the case now. The only reason people cannot perceive Jesus now is that He has not yet "appeared." When He made an appearance to Saul of Tarsus, he bowed (Acts 9:6)! When He made an appearance to Stephen as he was being stoned to death, Stephen asked Him to receive his spirit (Acts 7:59).

Jesus really is invested with "all



power in heaven and earth" (Matt 28:18). Angels, authorities, and powers have really been made subject to Him (1 Pet 3:22). The government has really been placed upon His shoulder, and He is really reigning until His enemies are openly under His feet (Isa 9:6; 1 Cor 15:25).

The exaltation of Jesus is not merely part of a creedal statement. **He has been exalted, and is governing the Kingdom.** Wherever He works, there are results. By referring to "His name," Peter is affirming that the risen and exalted Christ has been involved in the healing of this man. He has worked in the presence of these people, and no adversarial power could hinder or neutralize that work.

FAITH IN HIS NAME

"... through faith in His name . . ." Other versions read, "on the basis of faith in His name,"^{NASB} "by faith in the name,"^{NIV} "by faith in His name,"^{NRSV} "in the faith of His name,"^{DOUAY} "we believe in the One,"^{GWN} "by the faith in His name,"^{MRD} "through faith in Him,"^{NJB} "on the faith of His name,"^{YLT} "this happened because we trusted in the power of Jesus,"^{IE} "faith in that name being the condition,"^{WEYMOUTH} "on the condition of faith in His name,"^{WILLIAMS} "on the ground of faith in his name,"^{MONTGOMERY} "through and by faith in his name,"^{AMPLIFIED} and "it is faith in that name."^{PHILLIPS}

"The name" is the capacity in which He has been revealed. To be precise, "the name" of Jesus is confirmed by "the record" God has given of His Son (1 John 5:10-11). **It is what God has said about Jesus that clearly defines Him.** He has "given Him a name" by associating certain realities with Him. He has affirmed who Jesus is, and what He is doing. The following is representative of what God has revealed about Jesus.

- ⇒ "For **HE IS** our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us" (Eph 2:14).
- ⇒ "... Christ is **the head of the church**: and **HE IS** the Savior of the body" (Eph 5:23).
- ⇒ "And **HE IS** before all things, and by

Him all things consist" (Col 1:17).

- ⇒ "And **HE IS** the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead: **that in all things He might have the preeminence**" (Col 1:18).
 - ⇒ "For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, **HE IS** able to succor them that are tempted" (Heb 2:18).
 - ⇒ "Wherefore **HE IS** able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb 7:25).
 - ⇒ "But now hath He obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also **HE IS** the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises" (Heb 8:6).
 - ⇒ "And **HE IS** the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:2).
 - ⇒ "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for **HE IS** Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful" (Rev 17:14).
- Faith in Jesus' name is believing, trusting, and relying on what has been revealed of Him.** Where dependence upon Jesus is not found, faith is not present. When men do not lean the weight of their souls upon Jesus, it is because they do not have faith in Him. This is the faith without which "it is impossible to please God" (Heb 11:6).
- In this time of the New Covenant, if Jesus is not declared to the people, faith becomes impossible, for it comes by means of hearing the Gospel of Christ (Rom 1:14-17).** If a Jesus is being held out to men that is defined by mere human thought, faith will not be possible. Faith – real faith – cannot possibly be in "another Jesus." That kind of reliance – trust in "another Jesus" – is **delusion**, not faith. By its very nature, faith must rest on revelation, for it is the "substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of

things not seen (Heb 11:1).

Therefore, **“faith in His name” is reliance upon the revelation of the exalted Christ.** This revelation was brought to its peak when the Holy Spirit was “poured forth.” When He came, He did precisely what Jesus said He would.

- ⇒ He taught them all things (John 14:26).
- ⇒ He testified of Christ (John 15:26).
- ⇒ He guided them into all truth (John 16:13a).
- ⇒ Whatever He heard, He made known to them (John 16:13b).
- ⇒ He showed them things to come (John 16:13c).
- ⇒ He glorified Christ (John 16:14a).
- ⇒ He received the things of Christ and gave them to the disciples (John 16:14b-15).

That is nothing less than a revelation of the exalted Christ, and Peter now speaks of the effects of having faith in the Christ who had been revealed to him.

HATH MADE THIS MAN STRONG

“ . . . hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know . . . ” Other versions read, “which has strengthened this man whom you see and know,”^{NASB} “this man whom ye see and know was made strong,”^{NIV} “has made this man strong, whom you see and have knowledge of,”^{BBE} “whom you have seen and known, hath His name strengthened,”^{DOUAY} “hath made this man sound, whom ye see, and know,”^{GENEVA} “this man, whom you know, was healed, as all of you saw,”^{GWN} “He hath strengthened and cured this man, whom ye see and know,”^{MRD} “has brought back the strength of this man whom you see here and who is well known to you,”^{NJB} “this man was healed -- and you know how crippled he was before,”^{NLT} “has healed this man – and you know how lame he was before,”^{LIVING} “He was made completely well . . . You all saw it happen,”^{IE} “has made this man whom you see and recognize well and strong,”

AMPLIFIED and “which has cured this man whom you see and recognize.”^{PHILLIPS}

Peter is very specific in his utterance: “His name, through faith in His name.” **It is the revealed Christ who has done this work, but He did through Peter and John’s faith in Him.** That is, Jesus healed the man, but He did so by means of the faith that was found in Peter and John primarily, and the man himself secondarily.

This is the Jesus these people had “killed,” and now He has worked powerfully in their very presence. In this, Peter is giving glory to Jesus – identifying the Source of the miracle. On the surface, it looked as though Peter and John did the deed. Peter, however,

I did not see this wonderful expression. I had been taught by the group to whom I belonged that faith did not come from God – that it was simply believing the Bible. While it is true that faith brings one into the unwavering belief of Scripture, faith itself is larger than that. **To be more precise, faith involves believing and relying upon what God has revealed, or said.** Thus Abraham had faith before the Bible was written, yet it rested upon what God had said to him.

Further, there is a relying or trusting factor in faith – it is not simply giving assent to a matter, or acquiescing with it. Faith is not really faith until the person **acts** upon it, relying upon the integrity of God and the details of His revelation. **If a person does not shape his**

While it is true that faith brings one into the unwavering belief of Scripture, faith itself is larger than that. To be more precise, faith involves believing and relying upon what God has revealed, or said. Thus Abraham had faith before the Bible was written, yet it rested upon what God had said to him.

affirms that Jesus Himself actually did the work through their faith.

THE FAITH WHICH IS BY HIM

“ . . . yea, the faith which is by Him . . . ” Other versions read, “Yes, the faith which comes through Him,”^{NKJV/NASB/NIV} “the faith that is through Jesus,”^{NRSV} “the faith which is through Jesus,”^{RSV} “So the faith that comes through Him,”^{CSB} “the faith that comes through it [the name],”^{NAB} “even the faith that is through Him,”^{YLT} “faith given us from God,”^{LIVING} “the faith which He has given,”^{WEYMOUTH} “yes, faith inspired by Him,”^{WILLIAMS} “[Yes] the faith which is through and by Him [Jesus],”^{AMPLIFIED} and “and the faith which came through Him.”^{LITV}

I must acknowledge that for years

life around what God has said, he has not really believed it. If he does not do what God has said, He has not believed God.

Because we are dealing with matters outside of the circumference of human experience, faith must be given to us. **The reservoir of nature cannot yield faith, or cause us to believe.** Knowing this, Peter refers to “the faith which is by Him” – that is, by Christ. The word “by” (faith which is BY Him) is translated from the Greek word *δι*’ (die), which is a form of the preposition *δι*α (dee-ah). There is no way that this word can be made to mean “in.” **It does not speak of the object of faith, but of its Source, or the means through which faith is realized.** The lexical meaning of this word is, “the Means or instrument by which anything is effected . . . of one who is the author of the action as well as its instrument, or of the efficient cause,”^{THAYER}

"of the intermediate agent of an action by, through, by agency of," ^{FRIEBERG} "through, by means of," ^{UBS} "casual, through, by . . . of the agent," ^{LIDDELL-SCOTT} "through (the agency of) (personal agent), by (originator of an action)," ^{LEH} and "of means, instrument, agency by means of, through, with—of means, instrument." ^{GINGRICH}

But there is more to this than the lexical definition of a word. **Doctrine cannot rest upon etymology, for, in the last analysis, that is a human science.** Here I have provided the technical definition of the word to confirm that men of integrity and sound scientific

frequently affirmed in Scripture.

- ⇨ **GIVEN TO BELIEVE.** "For unto you it is **given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for his sake**" (Phil 1:29).
- ⇨ **BELIEVED THROUGH GRACE.** "And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had **believed through grace**" (Acts 18:27).

the brethren, and love with **faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ**" (Eph 6:23).

- ⇨ **FAITH AND SALVATION ARE NOT OF OURSELVES.** "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and **that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God**" (Eph 2:8).
- ⇨ **BY JESUS WE BELIEVE IN GOD.** "Who **by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God**" (1 Pet 1:21),

If faith is not of the flesh, or natural – or if faith delivers the perception of things unseen, enabling one to see the invisible God – it cannot possibly be the exercise of a natural or learned aptitude. It is not possible that faith is dispensed to every person naturally, and is then *released* by some act of the human will, as some affirm. Nor, indeed, is faith simply being convinced that a statement is true. **Faith brings to the human spirit the reality of something inaccessible to any of the natural senses – "the evidence of things not seen."** Faith includes a fervent desire to possess what has been declared, and is accompanied by the restructuring of life that leads toward its obtainment – "*the substance of things hoped for.*"

It should be evident that **something as effective as faith cannot be the product of human effort.** If the things accomplished and appropriated by faith are themselves transcendent to nature, then the means of obtaining them (faith) cannot possibly have its genesis in nature. It is not possible for nature to produce a quality or aptitude that can obtain eternal things.

HATH GIVEN HIM PERFECT SOUNDNESS

" . . . hath given him this perfect soundness . . ." Other versions read, "**perfect health,**" ^{NASB} "**complete healing,**" ^{NIV} "**made him well,**" ^{BBE} "**complete soundness,**" ^{DARBY} "**perfect healing,**" ^{LIVING} "**completely well,**" ^{IE} "**sound and strong again,**" ^{WEYMOUTH} "**Has given the man this perfect soundness [of body] before all of you,**" ^{AMPLIFIED} "**perfect health and strength,**" ^{PHILLIPS} and "**wholeness.**" ^{EMTV}

If faith is not of the flesh, or natural – or if faith delivers the perception of things unseen, enabling one to see the invisible God – it cannot possibly be the exercise of a natural or learned aptitude. It is not possible that faith is dispensed to every person naturally, and is then released by some act of the human will, as some affirm.

approaches will never contradict the word of the Lord.

Although some of us – myself included – lived for a considerable time in Christ before realizing that faith came from Christ, **Peter boldly announces it even before these people have believed.** This was part of the Gospel that he preached. It was included in his explanation of the events that had taken place before the eyes of this people. Oh, how far the modern church has drifted from its original moorings! **What was once confessed without inhibition must now be buttressed with all manner of doctrine and reasoning – and even then, it is frequently denied.** This is another evidence that a "*falling away*" has, indeed, taken place (2 Thess 2:3). **When things that are apparent in the Spirit must be taught, defended, and expounded to the church, a tragic condition exists!**

The fact that faith comes to us from outside of ourselves and nature is

- ⇨ **FAITH IS OBTAINED.** "*Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have **obtained like precious faith** with us through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ*" (2 Pet 1:1).
- ⇨ **FAITH WAS DELIVERED.** "*Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for **the faith which was once delivered unto the saints***" (Jude 1:3).
- ⇨ **FAITH CAME TO US.** "*So then **faith cometh** by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*" (Rom 10:17). "*But before **faith came,** we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed*" (Gal 3:23). "*But **after that faith is come,** we are no longer under a schoolmaster*" (Gal 3:25).
- ⇨ **FAITH IS FROM GOD AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.** "*Peace be to*

Just a few minutes before, this man was a helpless beggar that had to be carried to a gate of the Temple. Now there is not a flaw in him. His condition is perfect. His health is complete. He is thoroughly healed, with no remaining vestiges of the like-long lameness he had.

I have noticed over the years how few things of this sort are being reported. I do not doubt that their infrequency is one of the many results of a massive departure from the faith. The Spirit has spoken *“expressly”* concerning *“the latter times,”* that *“some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils”* (1 Tim 4:1). During such times faith is no longer present – for the departure is from *“the faith.”* **As a result, there is no fellowship with Christ, and grace cannot be received.** In that condition, of course, all manner of moral and spiritual imperfection will continue without interruption.

While the Lord is certainly able to give us perfect health, that work does not rank high in the priorities of His will. The reason is that bodily health, as wonderful as it is, is temporary. However, wherever it is found, it mirrors the spiritual health that is realized in Christ Jesus – like a *“sound mind”* (2 Tim 1:7), a *“pure heart”* (1 Pet 1:22), and a

“good conscience” (1 Tim 1:5). Of course, there is also such a thing as a *“single eye”* (Matt 6:22), *“holy hands”* (1 Tim 2:8), and feet that are *“shod with preparation of the Gospel of peace”* (Eph 6:15). Such things portray an inner health that also comes from the Lord – a health in which the soul is healed (Psa 41:4). There is a spiritually deficient state in which the hands *“hang down,”* the knees are *“feeble”* (Heb 12:12), the mind is *“double”* (James 4:8), the conscience is *“seared”* (1 Tim 4:2), eyes are *“full of adultery”* (2 Pet 2:1), and hearing is *“dull”* (Heb 5:11). How we long for *“perfect soundness”* to be found in all those who wear the name of Jesus!

IN THE PRESENCE OF YOU ALL

“ . . . in the presence of you all.”

Other versions read, *“as you can all see,”* NIV *“before you all,”* BBE *“in front of you all,”* CSB *“in the sight of you all,”* DOUAY *“as all of you saw,”* GWN *“before your very eyes,”* NLT *“You all saw it happen,”* IE *“you all see,”* WILLIAMS *“before all of you,”* AMPLIFIED and *“in full view of you all.”* PHILLIPS

As Paul said to Festus, who charged him with being *“mad,”* or out of his mind, NASB *“this thing was not done in a corner”* (Acts 26:26). The events of the day of Pentecost were public (2:1-12), and

so was this miracle. Peter and John did not retire to the back room to exert the power with which they had been endued. When Jesus walked among men, He spoke and worked publicly (Mk 8:32; John 18:20). Boldly Jesus challenged His critics, *“Which of you convinceth Me of sin?”* (John 8:46).

Every work of Christ will stand the test of human scrutiny. The truth of God will stand up under the most vigorous examination. It is only the works and words of the devil and the flesh that cannot pass honest and thorough examination.

After telling the people that Jesus had been witnessed by them all, and that He had been approved before them all, Peter now affirms that the same Jesus they had *“killed”* had been raised from the dead, and had, through their faith, given this man *“perfect soundness”* in their presence.

Men must be brought to confront what the Lord has done in their presence. Holy things that cannot be accounted for by the flesh and natural aptitude must be traced back to their Divine Source, and Peter does not hesitate to do so.

THE EFFECTS OF IGNORANCE

“¹⁷ And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers.”

Peter now sets out to diagnose the people before him. **He will identify why they took, crucified, and killed the Lord’s Christ.** Then, much to their consternation, he will affirm that **God worked through their ignorance** for His own glory and their condemnation.

I WOT

“And now, brethren, I wot . . .”

Other versions read, *“I know,”* NKJV *“I am conscious,”* BBE *“I realize,”* NLT *“have known,”* YLT and *“Now of course I know.”* PHILLIPS

This is an old English word that

means the opposite of “unwittingly.” The English definition is “wist; witting . . . to know, come to know” MERRIAM-WEBSTER The Greek word employed here is *οἶδα* (oi-da), which lexically means, “to perceive, notice, discover,” THAYER “know, understand, perceive,” UBS and “know . . . acquainted with . . . understand, recognize.” GINGRICH

This is not a rhetorical expression, said merely for effect – like casually dismissing something by saying, “I know, I know!” Peter is going to say what he sees, perceives, and understands.

Something To Be Seen

There is a vital Kingdom principle to be seen here. It was revealed in the ministries of John the Baptist, the Lord Jesus Himself, and the Apostles. **Those**

who entered into the work of the Lord labored within the circumference of understanding.



⇨ When many of the Pharisees and Sadducees came to John's baptism, he said discerningly, "*O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?*" (Matt 3:7). He had an understanding of the circumstances, as well as his role in the work of the Lord, and what needed to be said.

⇨ The Lord Jesus was always aware of what He was doing. It is said of Him, "*as My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things*" (John 8:28). It is also written, *He "needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was in man"* (John 2:25). He had an understanding of what He was to say, and of those to whom He said it.

⇨ When Peter dealt with the matter of Ananias and Sapphira, he knew their condition and what needed to be done (Acts 5:3-10). When he confronted a crafty Simon, he knew his condition and what needed to be said and done (Acts 8:18-23).

⇨ When Paul wrote his epistles, he understood what he was teaching (Eph 3:3-4,9). He also had an understanding of the circumstances that required a word from the Lord (2 Cor 11:4; Gal 3:1; 1 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim 1:4).

All of this, as well as our text, confirms that being inspired to speak, or being filled with the Spirit, does not bypass the understanding or powers of reason and discernment. The essential attribute of knowing God that is resident in the New Covenant (Jer 31:34; Heb 8:11), is also found in proper preaching and teaching.

Much of what is being said in the pulpits and *Christian* literature of the day is characterized by a personal ignorance of the ways of both God and man. **The religious schools are filling their students with borrowed knowledge, and a staggering percentage of it is from the world.** Their understanding of Scripture has been shaped by hermeneutics and linguistics rather than "*wisdom and spiritual understanding*" (Col 1:9). Their view of mankind is formed by psychiatrists and analysts

rather than the Word of God. To assist professional preachers and teachers to continue their careers in a state of ignorance, there are a multitude of ready-made sermons and lessons that they can deliver without so much as a grain of discernment.

All of this might very well appear to be of little consequence, **if it were not for accounts like the one before us.** Here is an example of God working through a man. He does not simply cause words to flow out of his mouth independent of understanding – as when king Saul prophesied. It is said of king Saul, "*behold he prophesied among the prophets . . . he prophesied in the midst of the house . . . he went on, and prophesied, until he came to Naioth in Ramah. And he stripped off his clothes also, and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all that day and all that night*" (1 Sam 10:11; 18:10; 19:23-24). **You will note that the Holy Spirit did not move any man to write a single word of Saul's prophecies.** His understanding did not accompany

preach or teach without understanding. Such persons need to be consigned to the "*room of the unlearned*" until such time as they can speak properly (1 Cor 14:16).

Much of the miserable condition of the modern church is directly owing to the **lack** of discerning preaching and teaching that is found within it. Until this situation is corrected – if it is even correctable – the modern church will continue in an ignorant and dead state.

Suffice it to say, **those who speak for God must have a gasp of the real situation, and be able to deliver words from God that are appropriate to that situation.** This will be lived out in our text, and it is imperative that we be able to perceive it.

THROUGH IGNORANCE YOU DID IT

" . . . that through ignorance ye did it . . ." Other versions read, "*you did it in ignorance,*" ^{NKJV} "*you acted in ignorance,*" ^{NASB} "*you did this . . . without knowledge,*" ^{BBE} "*you didn't know what*

Suffice it to say, those who speak for God must have a gasp of the real situation, and be able to deliver words from God that are appropriate to that situation. This will be lived out in our text, and it is imperative that we be able to perceive it.

them, and thus their content remains unknown. Neither, indeed, was he laboring together with God.

Now, in Christ Jesus, the manner of the Kingdom is quite different. The people are reconciled to God and His Holy Spirit is resident in them. The New Covenant provides access to God (Rom 5:2; Eph 2:18), learning from Christ (Eph 4:20-21; 1 John 5:20), and the acquisition of knowledge, wisdom, and spiritual understanding (Col 1:9). We also have the Scriptures, which are able to make us "*wise unto salvation*" (2 Tim 3:15). **In view of these realities, it is inexcusable for men to take it upon themselves to**

you were doing," ^{GWN} "*through misapprehensions ye did this,*" ^{MRD} "*neither you . . . had any idea what you were really doing,*" ^{NJB} "*you acted in ignorance [not aware of what you were doing],*" ^{AMPLIFIED} "*you had no idea what you were doing,*" ^{PHILLIPS} "*was due to your ignorance,*" ^{GNB} and "*acted according to ignorance.*" ^{LITV}

The world has a saying: "What you don't know won't hurt you." It is a foolish saying that imagines that oppositions not obviously aimed at you, and matters in which you are not seemingly involved, really have no impact upon you. Hence, they are things you really do not need to understand.

Thus, imagining that not knowing about such things is actually an advantage, the world also says, "ignorance is bliss." Such people imagine that ignorance is docile, indifferent, and non-disruptive.

Here, however, we see the extent to which ignorance will drive a person. You may remember that Jesus, while on the cross, prayed "*Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do*" (Luke 23:34). One time, God sent lions among the cities of Samaria, that killed them because they did not know the manner of God. "*And so it was at the beginning of their dwelling there, that they feared not the LORD: therefore the LORD sent lions among them, which slew some of them*"

the church in Thyatira (Rev 2:20).

In this text ignorance moved the peopled to listen to their leaders and call for Christ's brutal crucifixion – apparently without a twinge of conscience (Matt 27:25; Mk 15:11-14). **This did not diminish the magnitude of their sin, for there was no excuse for them to be ignorant.** God had approved of Jesus by means of "*miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know*" (Acts 2:22).

YOU RULERS DID ALSO

" . . . as did also your rulers." Other versions read, "*just as your rulers*

because He made Himself the Son of God" (John 19:7). But this was not sound thinking at all! **Rather than breaking the Law, Jesus had actually come to magnify it and make it honorable** (Isa 42:21). Rather than making Himself the Son of God, God had twice declared from heaven, "*This is My beloved Son*" (Matt 3:17; 17:5). **Of all of this, they were abysmally ignorant, and thus called for the swift death of Jesus.**

Although this was done "*in ignorance,*" it did not remove them from being murderers. **These people were not exonerated because they were ignorant.** After all, these were a covenanted people "*to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen*" (Rom 9:4-5). If ever there was a people on the face of the earth who should not have been ignorant about Jesus, it was this people!

There is no moral or spiritual depths to which an ignorant soul cannot sink. An ignorant church is capable of astounding things. It can oppose a man who preaches the truth, and rid themselves of him in a manner that is convenient to them.

. . . *therefore He hath sent lions among them, and, behold, they slay them, because they know not the manner of the God of the land*" (2 Kgs 17:26). Once Jeremiah said of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, "*Surely these are poor; they are foolish; for they know not the way of the LORD, nor the judgment of their God*" (Jer 5:4). Amos spoke of wayward Israel as those who "*know not to do right*" (Amos 3:10). Micah accounted for Israel's waywardness by saying, "*But they know not the thoughts of the LORD, neither understand they His counsel*" (Micah 4:12).

There is no moral or spiritual depths to which an ignorant soul cannot sink. An ignorant church is capable of astounding things. It can oppose a man who preaches the truth, and rid themselves of him in a manner that is convenient to them. It can condone sin like Corinth (1 Cor 5:1-2), be bewitched like the churches in Galatia (Gal 3:1), and be led to do reprehensible things like

did also,"^{NASB} "*as did your leaders,*"^{NIV} "*as did also your governors,*"^{GENEVA} "*as did also your chiefs,*"^{MRD} "*as did also your heads,*"^{TNT} and "*as was the case with your rulers also.*"^{WEYMOUTH}

Even though the rulers of the people operated under the cloak of wisdom, they were really ignorant. They spoke with great confidence when they examined Jesus. "*Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned Him to be guilty of death*" (Mark 14:63-64). With seeming confidence they told Pilate, "*We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ a King*" (Luke 23:2).

Their assessment sounded as though it was well thought out: "*We have a law, and by our law He ought to die,*

An Added Word
I feel compelled to add one more word to this brief treatise. Jesus spoke of religious leaders who "*have taken away the key of knowledge*" (Lk 11:52a). Such teachers were a hindrance to anyone who was trying to enter the Kingdom: "*ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered*" (Luke 11:52b). By means of withholding the knowledge of God, they effectively "*shut up the kingdom of heaven against men,*" or "*locked people out of the kingdom of heaven*"^{NRSV} (Matt 23:13).

When this condition happens, the door is opened for all manner of foolishness, wickedness, atrocity and injustice. It is not possible to fully state the danger of such a condition. **All manner of transgression within the professing church is directly traceable to the ignorance of the people – an ignorance that is the direct result of not hearing sound preaching and teaching.**

GOD SHOWED, AND HE HAS FULFILLED

“¹⁸ *But those things, which God before had showed by the mouth of all His prophets, that Christ should suffer,*

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He hath so fulfilled."

Once again, Peter will trace everything concerning Jesus back to God. **This will confirm that salvation is wholly of the Lord, with nothing of human origin in it** – and that includes Jesus' vicarious death!

THOSE THINGS GOD SHOWED BY ALL OF HIS PROPHETS

"But those things, which God before had showed by the mouth of all His prophets . . ." Other versions read, *"But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets,"*^{NKJV} *"But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets,"*^{NASB} *"what He had foretold through all the prophets,"*^{NIV} *"But the things which God foreshowed by the mouth of all the prophets,"*^{ASV} *"But the things which God had made clear before, by the mouth of all the prophets,"*^{BBE} *"But what God predicted through the mouth of all the prophets,"*^{CSB} *"what He had announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets,"*^{DARBY} *"but those things which God before had shewed by the mouth of all the prophets,"*^{DOUAY} *"and God, according as He had previously announced by the mouth of all the prophets,"*^{MRD} *"But the things God foretold long ago through all the prophets,"*^{NIB} *"that all the prophets had foretold about the Messiah,"*^{NLT} *"the declarations He made through all the Prophets,"*^{WEYMOUTH} *"what He predicted through the voice of all the prophets,"*^{ASV} *"what he by the lips of all the prophets foretold,"*^{WILLIAMS} and *"But God had foretold through all his prophets."*^{PHILLIPS}

In the determined scheme of things, there was a certain priority assigned to the prophetic office. Often prophets were used to call Israel back to God (Jer 3:12,22). They were counselors to kings (Isa 37:2-3). Concerning Israel, God is said to have *"hewed them"* by the prophets (Hos 6:5). Nations were often rebuked by the prophets (Amos 1:6; Obad 1:1-8; Nah 1:1; Zech 9:1). God raised up the prophets to denounce the absence of truth, mercy, and the knowledge of God (Hos 4:1). Before God moved in the earth, He made known what He was going to do through the prophets: *"Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the*

prophets" (Amos 3:7).

Yet, with all of this activity, the real reason for the Prophets was to prepare the world for the Messiah – the Christ of God. In this text, Peter speaks of *"all"* God's prophets speaking of things pertaining to the death of Christ and its accomplishments. Some spoke of these things directly, some in parables, and some in types and shadows. **However, if you were to remove Jesus Christ from history, there would be no need for the Prophets.** Their ministry was in view of the salvation wrought by Jesus.

It was this condition that enabled Paul to reason concerning Christ *"out of the Scriptures"* (Acts 17:2-3). Elsewhere Paul said He spoke *"none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come"* (Acts 26:22).

THAT CHRIST SHOULD SUFFER

" . . . that Christ should suffer . . ." Other versions read, *"that the Christ would suffer,"*^{NKJV} *"that His Christ would suffer,"*^{NASB} *"that His Messiah would suffer,"*^{NRSV} *"the things . . . that the Christ would have to undergo,"*^{BBE} *"the sufferings of His Messiah,"*^{GWN} *"that His Christ {or Messiah} would suffer,"*^{NIB} *"that the Messiah must suffer these things,"*^{LIVING} *"that His Messiah would suffer and die,"*^{IE} *"that His Christ (the Messiah) should undergo ill treatment and be afflicted and suffer,"*^{AMPLIFIED} and *"that His Messiah had to suffer."*^{GNB}

Here, suffering plus death equals suffering. From the redemptive point of view, these sufferings began when Jesus was pinioned on the tree. They concluded when He died. That death was the *"baptism"* to which Jesus referred when He said, *"But I have a*

SUFFERING
+ DEATH
= SUFFERING

baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (Luke 12:50). This was the *"baptism"* of suffering. That is, Jesus was engulfed by, or immersed into suffering – He died.

In his first Epistle, Peter also refers to the prophets' emphasis of the sufferings of Christ. *"Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow"* (1 Pet 1:10-11).

The very first promise of God, spoken to the devil in the presence of Adam and Eve, spoke of the sufferings of Christ as His heel being bruised (Gen 3:15). By way of further example, the twenty-second Psalm provides a remarkably detailed prophecy of the sufferings of Christ (Psa 22:1-21). The sixty-ninth Psalm does the same thing (Psa 69:1-21), as well as the entire eighty-eighth Psalm (Psa 88:1-18). Psalm 109:25 foretold how He became a reproach. Isaiah 50:6 prophesied of Him giving His back to the smiters. Isaiah 52:13-14 provides details about the disfigurement of Jesus during His sufferings. The entire fifty-third chapter of Isaiah even gives the Divine rationale that produced the sufferings of Christ (Isa 53:1-10). Daniel affirmed the effects of His sufferings, and how they eventuated in His death (Dan 9:24-26). Micah 5:1 foretold of Him being smitten on the cheek. Zechariah foretold of His betrayal (Zech 11:12-13), of the wounds in His hands (Zech 13:6), and how the sword of God Himself was directed against Christ (Zech 13:7).

The many sacrifices for sin that

There are not only words in prophecy, but there is a spirit in it as well – a living principle that drives and directs prophecy. We are categorically told that the spirit of prophecy is Christ Jesus. That is, He is the reason for prophecy, and the ultimate objective of it.

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were ordained under the Law testified in type of the sufferings of Christ (Lev 4:26, 35,37; 23:19; Num 15:25). The general rejection of and persecution of the Prophets also testified to the suffering of Christ, confirming that those aligned with God are always opposed by the world (1 Kgs 18:1; 19:1,10,14; Jer 2:30; 26:5; Matt 5:12; 23:34; Lk 6:23,26; Acts 7:52; 1 Thess 2:15; James 5:10).

There are not only **words** in prophecy, but there is a **spirit** in it as well – a **living principle that drives and directs prophecy**. We are categorically told that the spirit of prophecy is Christ Jesus. That is, **He is the reason for prophecy, and the ultimate objective of it**. Thus, an angel from heaven told John the Apostle, “*worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy*” (Rev 19:10). **In other words, the Subject of Scripture is Christ Jesus**. Jesus Himself said, “*Search the scriptures: for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they*

HE HATH SO FULFILLED

“... *He hath so fulfilled.*” Other versions read, “*He has thus fulfilled,*”^{NKJV} “*God fulfilled,*”^{NIV} “*He thus fulfilled,*”^{RSV} “*He has put into effect in this way,*”^{BBE} “*God has thus fulfilled,*”^{DARBY} “*God made ... come true,*”^{GWN} “*hath in this manner fulfilled [it],*”^{MRD} “*God has brought to fulfillment,*”^{NAB} “*He has fulfilled in this way,*”^{NET} “*this is the way God carried out what He had foretold,*”^{NJB} “*But God was fulfilling all,*”^{NLT} “*He did thus fulfill,*”^{YLT} “*God made this happen,*”^{AE} “*God has fulfilled what He foretold,*”^{AMPLIFIED} and “*He made it come true in this way.*”^{GNB}

This is an arresting statement. On the day of Pentecost, Peter also referred to God’s primary role in the death of Christ. “*Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain*” (Acts 2:23). The people did, indeed, take Jesus, crucifying and slaying Him

fulfilled the words of the prophets – *God has fulfilled what He foretold.*”^{AMPLIFIED}

Fulfilled prophecy is **not** things taking place that God **saw** ahead of time. With God, prophesying is **not** a matter of knowing ahead of time what men will do! **Prophecy has to do with what GOD will do!** Peter announces that it was God Himself who fulfilled what He had purposed. Again, prophecy has to do with Divine purpose, not foresight of what men are going to do.

This circumstance does not diminish the guilt of the people standing before Peter. **His words are not declared to excuse them from their guilt.** The fact that the prophets foretold their deed did not decrease its character. The Divine determination was that Jesus would die for the sins of the world, suffering the curse of the Almighty (Gal 3:13). The Jews’ purpose in Christ’s death was to rid themselves of His influence – to break His restraining bands from themselves (Psa 2:3). **Which purpose prevailed?** They did not have a solitary notion of fulfilling the will of God. Thus it was not them who fulfilled the word of the Lord, but God Himself.

God actually overruled the purposes of men, fulfilling His own determinations. In this, the wrath of man praised God. As it is written, “*Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee: the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain*” (Psa 76:10).

Why, then, does Peter speak in this manner, and why does this message not free the people from guilt? We must see that Peter is confirming that Jesus of Nazareth is, in fact, the promised Messiah.

⇒ **First**, in order for Him to be the Messiah, or Anointed One, what happened to Him must be traced back to God, not men, for He was “*the Lord’s Christ*” and “*the Christ of God*” (Lk 2:26; 9:20).

⇒ **Second**, God “*looketh on the heart*” (1 Sam 16:7), and “*searcheth the heart*” (Jer 17:10). He “*weigheth the spirits*” of men (Prov 16:2), probing and discerning the “*thoughts and intents of the heart*” (Heb 4:12).

This circumstance does not diminish the guilt of the people standing before Peter. His words are not declared to excuse them from their guilt. The fact that the prophets foretold their deed did not decrease its character. The Divine determination was that Jesus would die for the sins of the world, suffering the curse of the Almighty

are they which testify of Me” (John 5:39). The Bible is not primarily a manual of human conduct – even though it addresses that subject. **However, directions for conduct without empowerment from Christ results in condemnation.** This is because Divine requirements **exceed** the capacity of nature. Apart from Christ, they only confirm that man is in a fallen state, at enmity with God, and a child of wrath.

Therefore, Peter does not launch into a dissertation about how his listeners are to address the challenges of life, or what they are to do to fulfill the Law. He rather speaks of Christ, who is the ultimate Subject. **He will measure the conduct of the people by their response of Jesus.**

through the “*wicked hands*” of the Roman government. The matter, however, was supervised by God, whose purpose was being fulfilled. **The people could not go one millimeter beyond the Divine appointment in this matter, nor was it possible for them to in any way come short of it.** Even though the death of Christ appeared as though it was governed by men, it was being precisely carried out under Divine control. **Every single prophecy concerning that death had to be executed** – and there was not a man on earth, or a spirit among the powers of darkness that was intent upon fulfilling prophecy!

Peter does not did not say the Jews fulfilled what the prophets had foretold about Christ’s sufferings! He rather declares that it was God who

And what was found in the hearts of those who took, delivered, crucified, and killed Jesus? Did they contain noble thoughts? Were their intentions to please God? Were humbleness and contriteness found in them? Indeed, their hearts were utterly corrupt. They “*despised and rejected*” Jesus, just as God had declared (Isa 53:3). They hated Him “*without a cause,*” as the Psalmist foretold (Psa 69:4). Even though they could find no sin in Him, they “*vehemently accused Him*” (Lk 23:10). **Such corruption within men could not be overlooked, for God is righteous.**

Years later, Paul delivered a scathing word to some Jews in Antioch of Pisidia. He told them **they** had fulfilled the Scriptures in condemning Jesus. “*For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew Him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning Him. And though they found no cause of death in Him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of Him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre*” (Acts 13:29).

There is no conflict between Peter and Paul on this matter. Both said the Jews had done the deed in ignorance: “*through ignorance ye did it,*” ^{PETER} and “*they knew Him not, nor yet the voice of the prophets.*” ^{PAUL} Both highlight the determination of the Jews: “*whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was*

If the purpose of God could be fulfilled when malice filled their hearts, and they were driven by a depraved nature and the wicked one himself, the mercy of God can surely be awakened toward these very people if they have contrite hearts. God is not only Sovereign in the matter of providing salvation, He is also Sovereign in the matter of fulfilling that salvation.

determined to let him go,” ^{PETER} and “*And though they found no cause of death in Him, yet desired they Pilate that He should be slain.*” ^{PAUL} Both emphasized that it was the Scriptures that were fulfilled: “*But those things, which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer,*” ^{PETER} and “*the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them.*” ^{PAUL} **Peter’s point is that the will of the Lord was done. Paul’s point is that the will of the people was not done.**

Something To Be Seen

While Peter’s proclamation did not excuse the wicked deeds of the people, or remove guilt from them, there was something it **did** do. It did, in fact, open the door of hope. **If the purpose of God could be fulfilled when malice filled their hearts, and they were driven by a depraved nature and the wicked one himself, the mercy of God can surely be awakened toward these very people if they have contrite hearts.** God is not only Sovereign in the matter of providing salvation, He is also Sovereign in the matter of fulfilling that salvation. It is

inconceivable that God would provide a remedy for sin, then not be able to effectively apply it.

In every aspect of salvation, **the ultimate worker is God Himself.** He sent Jesus (1 John 4:14). He drove Him into the wilderness to be tempted by the Devil (Mk 1:12). He dispatched angels to minister to Him (Mk 1:13). He sustained Jesus (John 8:29). He taught Jesus what to do (John 5:36). He is the One who delivered Jesus up (Rom 8:32). He is the One who smote Jesus (Isa 53:4). He is the One who withdrew from Jesus (Matt 27:46). He is the One who raised Jesus (Acts 13:37). He is the One who enthroned and empowered Jesus (Phil 2:9; Matt 28:18). That is why the redeemed shout, “*Salvation to our God . . . and unto the Lamb*” (Rev 7:10). **I know from experience that little spiritual growth can be realized until this marvelous truth is seen with decided clarity.**

As long as men associate salvation primarily with **their** initiatives and activity, they will remain spiritually juvenile.

CONCLUSION

We are being exposed to Peter’s second proclamation of Christ. Thus far, in both proclamations, there has been no reference to the love of God, the grace of God, or the longsuffering of God. The reason for Christ’s death has been traced to Divine intent, not human need. Both messages have emphasized the vileness of the people their rejection of and opposition to Christ. Both messages have accentuated the words of the prophets. Both have also underscored that God was

at work, fulfilling His own determinations.

In all of this, we are beholding what is involved in using “*the keys of the Kingdom of heaven*” (Matt 16:19). From another point of view, we are beholding the involvements of laying the foundation, and providing something upon which faith can be based.

It is becoming increasingly

apparent to me that the modern church has drifted far from its first moorings. The thrust of modern preaching is being placed upon what men need, not what God has done, or what He has provided. **By its very nature, the work of God defines what men need. What God has provided precisely identifies what men require.**

There is no need to be diverted to contrived and elaborate explanations of

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what men need, particularly when they are based upon a purely human analysis. Touching the hearts of men is really the work of the Holy Spirit. **Only He can effectively convince men of the guilt of sin, the need for righteousness, and the futility of serving the devil** (John 16:80-11). Further, His work is realized through the proclamation of Christ, particularly regarding His association with God and the fulfillment of His purpose.

There are two things that Peter is making clear, and they both throw light

upon the human condition. (1) What men did to Jesus. (2) What God did to Jesus. So far as intention is concerned, these two areas of activity are at variance with one another. The actions of men were intended to get rid of Jesus. The action of God was to get rid of sin and destroy the devil. So far as outcomes were concerned, the activity of the people was to be able to live without Jesus. The action of God was to provide real life through Jesus.

It seems to me that much of the *Christianity* of our time is managing to obscure both of these perspectives. The

result is a people who have "a form of godliness," yet deny, or reject, "the power thereof" (2 Tim 3:5). **In other words, the modern message is man-centered, not God-centered.** Relevancy is perceived as having to do with life in the world – the here and the now.

For this reason, I find the book of Acts particularly refreshing. Its water is pure. There are no institutional corruptions in it – no sectarian motives. We are witnessing the expression of genuine spiritual life, and it is comforting and enlivening!

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 11/10/2006. We will continue our current series of lessons on the book of Acts. The Fourteenth lesson will cover verses 19 through 26 of the third chapter: "PETER SPEAKS TO THE PEOPLE, #2." Peter calls upon the people to repent and be converted, in order that their sins may be blotted out and seasons of refreshing come upon them. With wisdom and power he proclaims Christ as the fulfillment Moses and the Prophets. 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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WORD OF TRUTH FELLOWSHIP Website: <http://wotruth.com/wotf/wotindex.htm>

COMMENTARY on Hebrews: <http://wotruth.com/hebindex.htm>

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