



The Book of Acts

Bringing in a New Dispensation

Acts 2:22-47 | The Non-Grace Gospel

Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father (1:9). The disciples waited as instructed for the promise of the Holy Spirit and, in the meantime, chose a replacement for Judas (1:12,26). In chapter two, the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles. This indwelling by the Spirit was manifested through the speaking of other languages as the Spirit gave them utterance, so that all in Jerusalem heard the wonderful works of God (2:11). The crowd, hearing the cacophony of languages being spoken, accused the apostles of being drunk (2:13). The apostles all stood together in unity and Peter sets them straight; “For these are not drunken, as you suppose.” (2:15).

Peter begins a sermon that will give three appeals and three prophecies. First, to the *men of Judaea and the prophet Joel*, Second, to the **men of Israel** and the prophecy of Psalm 15, and finally to all the **men and brethren** and the prophecy from Psalm 110.

Notice Peter’s appeal for each group to hear what he has to say:

-Ye men of Judaea...harken to my words (2:14).

-Ye men of Israel, hear these words (2:22).

-Men and brethren, let me freely speak to you (2:29).

Acts 2:14-21 | *First Appeal: To the Men of Judaea | Joel 2*

We looked at the first appeal in our last class. Peter made an appeal to the **men of Judaea**, those living in Jerusalem. It was there that Jesus was rejected and crucified, so perhaps that is why he makes his first appeal for them to believe in Jesus as Messiah. We will see in a moment, he expands his appeal to the men of Israel, and then to all men and brethren. Peter is setting the Jerusalem crowd straight in that these men are not drunken. Instead, he shows them, via the prophet Joel, that a prophecy is being fulfilled.

There are several rules to follow when interpreting all Scripture, including prophecy. Here are just a couple of key “laws” or rules to consider:

1) The Golden Rule. When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense.

2) The Law of Double Reference.

This law, or rule, observes the fact that often a passage of a block of Scripture is speaking of two different events separated by a long period of time. In the passage itself, they are blended into one picture, and the time gap between the two events is not presented by the text itself. The fact that a gap of time exists is known because of other Scriptures, but in that particular text itself the gap of time is not seen.¹ (Examples, Zechariah 9:9-10; Isaiah 11:1-5).

I think we can see both rules in play here.

Verse 16 —

This is that. Peter did not say, this is *like* that. His point to the men of Judaea was that the apostles were not drunk, but Joel's prophecy was being fulfilled. However, the second half of the prophecy is not *plain* sense since we can see by reading the passage that only half of Joel's prophecy was fulfilled. There is a gap between verse 18 and 19. The second half of this event is different in that it concerns the end times. Verses 19-21 will be fulfilled before that great and notable day of the Lord, or the Tribulation.

Peter has two more appeals, and his point in the next two sections is that since King David, the patriarch, and prophet, was dead and buried, he was not referring to himself in Psalm 16:8-11, nor in Psalm 110. He is writing about the Messiah (the Christ) and his resurrection.

Acts 2:22-24 | *Second Appeal: To the Men of Israel* | *Prophecy: Psalm 16*

Verse 22-24

Peter made an appeal to the men of Judaea. Now he makes an appeal to the **men of Israel**. Is he differentiating between those who are from the southern kingdom and those from the northern? The two had not been united since after the days of Solomon nearly 1,000 years before. And the southern kingdom of Israel had not existed for 700 years. It could be he is referring to the same "Israelites" which would be all who descended from Jacob. Jesus performed many **miracles, and wonders, and signs...in their midst** as He ministered in the region of Israel, north of Judaea in Galilee. Regardless, Peter lays the blame for Christ's death at their feet.

¹ Arnold Fruchtenbaum. Footsteps of the Messiah. Ariel Ministries, 2003.

The foreknowledge of God (vs. 23), the crucifixion did not catch God by surprise. **God ...raised him up...death** could not keep him (vs. 24). This Jesus you crucified is alive! As Paul would state later on, in Romans 14:9, Jesus is both Lord of the dead and the living. This is an awesome verse since it completely refutes Calvinism's claim that Jesus' slavific plan was only for a select (or elect) group of people. He is not Lord over some that He has chosen; He is Lord over all. The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ affects God's entire system of order. Jesus Christ is Lord over all, the dead and the living.

This statement that God raised up Jesus (vs. 24) and that He was not left in the grave (vs. 27), but alive, came a great shock, as we will see, to those who applauded his death in Judaea and Israel.

Verses 25-28—

David speaketh concerning him (Jesus). Peter's appeal is meant to convince Israel that Jesus is their Messiah. Peter is referencing another Old Testament prophecy, here Psalm 16:8-11 (a case where Scripture interprets Scripture). **I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand.**

In history, a temporary seat at a ruler's right hand was a position of honor, even more so if it was permanent. Peter uses these verses to give evidence that the Messiah was supposed to die and be resurrected. Sadly and tragically, the Jews had all missed this. They had waited so long for their Messiah, but they missed Him when He showed up. Even the Apostles had missed this until after they had seen Jesus alive (Luke 18:31-34).

This reference to David's psalm gives evidence that the Messiah was to die and be resurrected. Peter is proving Jesus was the Messiah David was speaking of. There was rejoicing in hope because of the resurrection and the promise that God would **not leave** Messiah's **soul in hell**. The word **hell** is not the lake of fire, but in Hebrew, Sheol, or literally, the grave. A better English translation would be *Hades*.

Acts 2:25-36 | Third Appeal: To Men and Brethren | Prophecy: Psalm 110

Verses 29-31—

Now Peter appeals to everyone together. To make clear, Peter assures them, **men and brethren**, this Psalm does not refer to David himself, for **he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre (tomb) is with us unto this day**. David, being a **prophet** (vs. 30), understood **since God had sworn an oath**

that **Christ** (or Messiah) would **sit on his throne** (Psalm 132:10,11). Therefore, (vs. 31) Peter shows, David was speaking of the **resurrection of Christ** (Messiah). His **soul was not left in the grave, neither did his flesh see corruption.**

Verse 32 —

And there are **witnesses** to all of this! We, the apostles. They had all seen him and spent forty days with him (1:3).

Verses 33-36 —

Jesus is at **the right hand of the God**. The promise of the Holy Ghost is now being poured out (shed), and this is what they now see and hear. Peter quotes from Psalm 110:1 in verse 34,35. Until I make thy foes thy footstool at the Second Coming. (That is, the house of Israel, not the church).

Peter makes sure the nation of Israel is hearing him: **That same Jesus who ye have crucified, he is both Lord and Christ.** You people made a big mistake! You killed your master (Lord) and Messiah.

Acts 2:37-47: The Results of Pentecost | A Different Dispensation Than Ours

Verse 37 —

Now when they heard this, they were pricked in the heart. Keep in mind who the **They** are. They are: Men of Judaea (2:14), Men of Israel (2:22), and Men and Brethren (2:29). Peter was speaking to all the Jews (or converts to Judaism). When they heard they had put their Messiah to death, they were pierced through the heart. We might say, “When I heard the news, it was like I was stabbed in the heart!” Much of the crowd believed Peter. Now they understood their prophets. It was clear what they had done. The shock of hearing what they had done left them heartbroken. All their lives they had waited for Messiah, but instead of receiving Him, they killed him.

That they were **pricked in their heart** indicates they believed Jesus was the Messiah. But would He accept them? They had heard Peter’s speech regarding the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and it had impacted them. Now, they asked, **What shall we do?** Where *do we go from here?*

Verse 38 —

Then Peter said unto them (The Jews). Peter is the main spokesman for the apostles. The first thing Peter told the Jews who had rejected the Messiah, was that they must **repent**. In session 2, we discussed how Biblical repentance means *a change of mind*. I am assuming Peter told them, *you have*

heard my message, now change your mind about the Messiah. This is not penance Peter is talking about, but a change of mind.

Keep in mind that Peter is addressing Jews who were a part of Israel. It had been promised to them they would be kings and priests in God's kingdom (See our Revelation study. Revelation 1:6; 5:10. Also 1 Peter 2:9). They were to be unto God a kingdom of priests (perpetual, Exodus 29:9), and a holy people (Deuteronomy 7:6; 14:21; 26:19; 28:9). Now that they believed in their Messiah; they needed to cleanse themselves or set themselves apart from *the crooked nation that had rejected the Messiah.* *They must now be holy as saints.*

What exactly did they believe? They believed in the Death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In response they asked "What must we do." Peter said, Repent and be Baptized...

The confusion that believers face today is that repentance in our minds carries the idea of cleansing our life before we can be accepted by God. That is not the Biblical meaning of repentance. The clear teaching in the New Testament is that you and I are saved by grace through faith. The salvation we enjoy is the gift of God (Eph. 2:8). But that gift of salvation by grace through faith would not come until it was revealed to the apostle Paul, later (See Ephesians 3) Instead of Peter telling them to believe by grace through faith, he tells the Jews in verse 40 save yourselves.

But they not only had to change their mind (repent), they also had to perform a work.

Be baptized. In the former dispensation, baptism was required as a ritual cleansing. But in our dispensation of grace, baptism is another false addition to faith. **Baptize** is the Greek word *baptizo*, which means to immerse, or dip. The baptism that Peter instructs them to *do* is the Jewish ceremonial cleansing baptism. Jews practiced purification immersion, or ritual washings in a Mikveh.

Here, for the Jews, it was a summons to turn to God, but this time in the name of Jesus Christ (Messiah). Their baptism was the cleansing act of their repentance. Without both, repentance and baptism, there could be no **remission of the sins** of rejecting and killing their Messiah. If they did that, Peter promises them the **gift of the Holy Ghost**.

Often pastors today refer to baptism as *an outward sign of an inward reality*. For these Jews it was more than a symbol or a sign, it was completely mandatory.

Today, water immersion (baptism) is not required. There is only one immersion for the believer today. All who put their belief, faith, or trust in the finished work of Jesus Christ, have been baptized (immersed) into the Holy Spirit (Romans 6:3,4; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 4:5; Galatians

3:26-28). What we call *Christian baptism* today is purely symbolic and is not required for salvation. Unfortunately, there are many who believe they are not “really” saved until they are baptized.

Contrary to popular belief, baptism is not the first step of discipleship. Today, when a person believes in Jesus Christ, he is washed; he is sanctified; he is justified (1 Corinthians 6:11). There are no steps for a believer today. Baptism was a Jewish ritual, and it is unnecessary for the body of Christ today. Does the New Testament prohibit baptism today for anyone in the Body of Christ? No, but neither does it command it. In the dispensation of grace, baptism is optional.

Verse 39 —

The promise could be twofold, first the everlasting covenant of the Kingdom that was first promised to Abraham (Genesis 17:7,8), **unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off**, all Israel, even those scattered. Second, it could refer to the promise of the gift of the Holy Ghost (vs. 38). This is not a salvation passage for people today. This is Jewish through and through. If you apply the *ekklesia* (or what we call the Church) today to this historical account of what happened on the Day of Pentecost, you are going to come up with doctrine and theology that is mixed with law and grace.

Verse 40 —

Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Who was the *untoward generation*? And why did they need to be saved from it? It is that generation Jesus prophesied about in Matthew 23:34-24:2. It was the current generation of Jews they were living among. It is the generation whose “house is left unto you desolate” (Matthew 23:38).

A desolation was coming upon all those of Israel who rejected and killed the Messiah unless they would proclaim, “Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord” (Matthew 23:39). Peter instructs the Jewish nation on Pentecost to **“save yourselves!”**

Today, Salvation is not of yourselves (Ephesians 3:8). One cannot save himself. We would never give a gospel message telling an unbeliever to save himself. We would say, receive the gift. Therefore, **“save”** (Greek: *sozo*) cannot be salvation by grace through faith. And this establishes more proof that this *ekklesia* is not the completed *ekklesia* that you and I are a member of (See sessions 3,4). However, these new believers were “in Christ,” i.e., the Body of Christ, but it was not the completed body. That will come later with the revelation given to the Apostle Paul.

Verse 41 —

They received his word...they were added...Not personal salvation by grace through faith, but 3,000 added to those who already believed the kingdom was at hand (All the disciples: Acts 1:6; Acts 1:15). They were added to the assembly via repentance and baptism. They were not becoming Christians as we think of becoming a Christian today. They were preparing themselves for the promise of the Kingdom of God. Via, signs and miracles of the Apostles, the preaching of Peter, belief in Jesus as their Messiah, and their own works of the Law. Why only Jews? Were they against those who were outside of Israel? Not necessarily. They knew from the Scriptures that some Gentile nations would serve Messiah in the kingdom (Isaiah 60:3) and that nations would be worship the LORD and keep the feast, but only AFTER the kingdom was established (Zechariah 14:16).

It is only after the kingdom is rejected, and postponed, by the nation of Israel that the Lord appeared to Saul (later Paul) to reach the Gentiles and offer justification apart from the works of the Law (that is, by grace through faith). At that point, a mystery will be revealed (Ephesians 3:6), and the *ekklesia* will be joined by Gentiles, thus *knitting together and completing* one body of Jew and Gentile in Christ (Colossians 2:2,10). We will see this mystery begin to be revealed in Acts chapters 9 and 13.

But here, on the Day of Pentecost, Peter is presenting an offer to prepare the Jews for the Kingdom if they repent, i.e., change their minds about the Messiah and if they perform a work, i.e., baptism; or a ritual cleansing, saving themselves.

Verse 42 —

These new believers followed **apostles' doctrine** (that is, the so-called “great commission”). They taught the believers “everything that Jesus commanded them”. What is it that Jesus commanded the disciples to do and teach? They were to *preach the kingdom of heaven is at hand, heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast our devils...* (See Matthew 10:8).

These 3,000 souls continued in **fellowship, breaking of bread** (taking meals together), and **prayers**.

Verse 43 —

And fear came upon every soul. This does not sound like a grace message. **Fear** is the Greek word Phobos. The word is sometimes translated as terror or dread. When a person is saved today, by grace through faith, there is rejoicing. What caused fear in this case? The apostolic **wonders and signs**?

Verse 44, 45 —

Together, and had all things in common, sold their possessions and goods, parted them to all, as every man had need. To prepare for the Kingdom, they were taking the words of Jesus literally (Matthew 19:29). This is like socialism/Marxism, and we will find out later in Acts that it did not work (Acts 11:29; 24:17; Romans 15:25-28; 1 Corinthians 16:1,3; 2 Corinthians 2:8:4; Galatians 2:10). The Bible is not promoting Marxism. In Marxism, people are forced to give up their wealth. They have a mantra, which is false: “*You will own nothing, and be happy.*” The Bible always favors honestly gained ownership of goods and private property. All we have to do is look at the Ten Commandments to see God forbids coveting or stealing another man’s property. Again, in Acts 2, this was all voluntary. It would fail. Socialism, or Marxism, is always a failed form of economics and wherever you live in the world, you should work against it and reject it.

Verse 46 —

Continuing daily with one accord in the temple. These Jews who were added to the *ekklesia* worshipped in the Jewish Temple, which required sacrifices and offerings. These new believers in Jesus as Messiah followed the Torah (The Law given to Moses at Mt. Sinai) were still practicing Jews, which means they were still living under the Law of Moses. Anyone wishing to enter the Temple, to be ritually cleansed, had to immerse themselves in the *Mikvah*. The Temple was central to Jewish existence, and entering required daily and weekly personal, voluntary, and obligatory offerings. They were not saved by grace through faith as we are. The dispensation of grace had not begun.

Verse 47 —

Favor with all the people. Because they were practicing Jewish law, there was no discord among the rest of the Jews who had not believed. **And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.** The Lord added to the *ekklesia*, this assembly of Jewish brethren who repented and were baptized. The word **church** must always be interpreted in its context (See sessions 3 and 4 for a rather lengthy discussion on the *church/ekklesia*).

What is it they were being **saved** from? The answer is in verse 40, this untoward generation. So that they might inherit the Kingdom. We cannot assume this is salvation as we understand it. To do so means, we are reading something into the passage that is not there.

Salvation by grace through faith will come, but this is not that.