

**Acts #8**  
**The Beginning of the Last Days**  
Acts 2:14-21

**In our last study of this book we simply took two verses of scripture out of their context and preached on the fact that we need a new vision of what God wants to accomplish through us, as we commit ourselves to His watch care.** We looked at Proverbs 29: 18 and realized the warning that, "Where there is no vision, the people perish," and sought to realize our own personal need of new dreams and visions with each new day.

**This week we are going to look at the first part of Peter's Pentecostal sermon.**

Look at verses 14-15, "But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, You men of Judaea, and all that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and harken to my words; For these are not drunk as you suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day."

**It was only natural that Peter should be the one who came forward and delivered the message of Pentecost.** For Peter was bold, he was alert, he was zealous. But more than any of these, Peter had a score to settle with himself for the cause of Christ, for it was this same Peter that, on the night of Jesus' trial, had cursed and swore that he had never known this man called "the Christ." Surely these things must still have been on Peter's mind as he wrote in I Peter 3:15-16, "Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: having a good conscience that, whereas they speak evil of, as evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ."

**Peter had grown in the grace and wisdom of the Lord, that he did not allow ridicule and criticism of the skeptics to disturb him, for he saw a glorious opportunity to deliver a message concerning the lordship of Christ.**

Notice in verse 15 how Peter deals with those that had scoffed in verse 13, "Others, mocking said, These men are full of new wine." Peter answered, "...These are not drunk, as you suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day."

We must remember that Peter was speaking to the Jews, and therefore, he simply reminded them of their own knowledge of the scriptures, as seen in Ecclesiastes 10:16, "Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child, and thy princes eat in the morning." And then once more in Isaiah 5:11, "Woe unto them who rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; who continue until night, till wine inflames them." **The Jewish day was divided into four parts,**

starting at 6:00 a.m., and the first three hours were set-aside for prayer and the morning sacrifice in the temple; and no Jew was allowed to taste anything till he had offered his morning prayer.

Notice that Peter does not allow himself to become bogged down in some moral or theological argument, but continues onward to the heart of his message.

Look at verses 16-21, "But this is that which was spoken through the prophet, Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit, and shall prophesy: And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath: blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come; And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

The reference is to Joel 2:28-32, and to the Jew the prophesy was concerning the coming of the Messiah. The Jews did not think of the last days as the end of the world, but as to the glorious rule of their Messiah!!

The Bible indicates that the last days for this world, as we know it, actually began in Acts 2:17. This truth is seen in Hebrews 1:1-2, "God, who as sundry times and in diverse manners spoke in times past unto the fathers by the prophets. hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds." 1 Peter 1:20 tells us that Christ "verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for us." Then in 1 John 2:18 we read, "Little children, it is the last time: and you have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrist; whereby we know that it is the last time."

But, we must be careful to distinguish between the "last days" (plural), and the "last day" (singular). The "last day" (singular) refers to the final resurrection and the White Throne Judgment, as seen in John 12:48, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."

Look at verses 17-18, "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit, and they shall prophesy."

The words, "I will pour out my Spirit" signifies the abundance of giving, as seen in Titus 3:5-6, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior."

**The meaning is not that the Holy Spirit would be poured out upon all persons, both good and bad; but rather, that the Holy Spirit was not to be limited to the Jews, or even to a particular class of people.** In this Day of Grace the invitation is to **"whosoever will."** The message is no longer to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," and when Jesus came and offered the kingdom and the Gospel "to the Jew first" (Romans 1:16). Therefore, *servants* and *handmaidens* as well as *masters* and *kings* can receive the Holy Spirit by simply placing their faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ!!

Jesus made this statement in John 16:13, "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come." **Please notice that Jesus said the Holy Spirit will "guide" us!** Jesus does not promise that the Holy Spirit will control us. He does not promise that the Holy Spirit will drive us. **He does not say that the Holy Spirit will force us to do anything.** Jesus said, "He will guide you..."

I have often heard people talk about the "Spirit controlled life." **With all due respect, that is not a biblical statement!** The Holy Spirit is our *guide*, not our *controller*. At no point do we lose our ability to choose to follow His leading. Consequently, we are always responsible for our words and actions.

But Jesus did not stop there, He also said, "He (the Holy Spirit) will guide you into all the truth..." **The Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of truth.** A vital part of His ministry is to guide believers into truth and according to what is true.

**In other words, the Holy Spirit helps believers discern between what is true and what is not; what is wise and what is foolish; what is best and what is simply OK.** Each day is full of decisions. Most of our decisions concern issues not clearly spelled out in the Scriptures, for example, where to attend school, whether to hire a particular applicant, how much to budget for vacation, on and on it goes.

**As you are barraged with the details of everyday living, the Holy Spirit will guide you.** He will give you that extra on-the-spot sense of discernment you need to make both big and small decisions. And the wonderful thing is that as you develop a greater sensitivity to His guidance, you will worry much less

about the decisions you make. **Why? Because the Holy Spirit is a holy and trustworthy guide.**

**The Bible makes it clear that God desires to make His will known to us.** He wants you to know what to do and when to do it. Therefore, my responsibility is to listen and then to follow His guidance for my life!

Look at verses 19-20, "And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath: blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come."

**The fulfillment of Joel's prophecy did not take place on the day of Pentecost, but marked the beginning of the "last days."** Verses 17 and 18 took place at Pentecost, but verses 19 and 20 will not take place until the rapture of the church takes place, for it refers to the events of the Tribulation, as seen in Revelation 6:12, "And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood." And then in Revelation 8:12, "And the fourth angel sounded, and upon the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise."

In other words, Peter used Joel's prophecy to let the men of Judah know that the miracle of Pentecost was just the beginning of a series of wonders and signs which would take place during the times of Messiah!!

**We have been living in "the last days" for over 2,000 years.** Surely the Rapture of the Church is imminent. Jesus could come at any second of any minute. My question to you is simply this: "Are you ready for His coming?"

Look at verse 21 because it gives you the formula for being ready, "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

This passage of scripture reminds us of Romans 10:13-17, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things: But they have not all obeyed the Gospel. For Elijah saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God."

To call upon the Lord for salvation means that the individual who calls has heard the Good News of Jesus, as seen in John 5: 24, "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. "

Today, as the Word of God awakens your heart to the convicting power of the Holy Spirit, do not pass the opportunity of being saved!!!