

Sermon Title: Will You Call On The Lord?  
Scripture Text: Acts 2:14-23 (Acts #5)

Speaker: Jim Harris  
Date: 2-12-23

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Come with me; we are in the Book of Acts. We have made it all the way into the middle of Chapter 2, and that is where we are going to come this morning.

It is now 50 days after Jesus' crucifixion. The word "Pentecost" (Acts 2:1) means "50 days"—"Pentecost" is 50 days after Passover, and Jesus died on the Passover. It is only a few days after Jesus ascended to the Father; that was a big deal. The Holy Spirit has arrived, exactly as Jesus promised many times. And it happened in the very same room where these "hundred and twenty" people had gathered together just days before (1:15), where they put forth Matthias to replace Judas, who had killed himself after he had betrayed the Lord Jesus Christ; and now, Matthias is the new twelfth Apostle. It was probably all the same room from where Jesus held that final Passover with His men; it was a large "upper room" in Jerusalem, where the "hundred and twenty" met (1:12-13)—it was a big place of some kind.

Well, what happened? Let's get a running start on our text for today by looking back to the beginning of the chapter: "When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves"—the words imply that there was probably something that looked like a ball of fire, and then from that, little tongues broke off, distributed, separated—"distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance" (Acts 1:1-4; NASB-1995, and throughout, unless otherwise noted).

So they are gathered, probably praying. God sent this miraculous sound—probably like a tornado or a hurricane was raging, except that nothing was being blown by a wind; it was the sound *like* that, this *incredible* sound. He also sent a miraculous *visual* manifestation, as if "tongues" of "fire" broke apart and "rested" on "each" of the ones in that room. Would that have been something to see!

Well, a "crowd" heard the sound, and they began to gather to see what was happening. And then came the other miracle: All those that gathered in that room began to speak "the mighty deeds of God" (vs. 11), but they spoke in languages that they did not know, but they were the native languages of the people in Jerusalem who were visiting from all the places around the Roman Empire for the Feast of Pentecost. At least 16 different languages, or distinct dialects of languages, are mentioned in Verses 9 through 11. That was the first-ever manifestation of the Gift of Tongues—or, the Gift of Languages (cf. Gen. 11:9; 1 Cor. 14:10).

As First Corinthians 14:21-22 explains: That was part of the signs that God gave to unbelieving Israel, validating what Jesus said. Remember, after His miracles, the leaders of the Jews said, "Yeah, we see the miracles. They are all done by the power of Satan! That man is satanic!" (cf. Matt. 9:34; 12:24) And Jesus said, "The kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation, producing the fruit of it" (Matt. 21:43, LSB). God was going to turn His back on Israel *for a time* (Rom. 11:25-27)—and that is the time in which we live.

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Well, "tongues" was a "sign" that that was happening (1 Cor. 14:22): that God was now going to be bringing those Jews who *did* believe (Rom. 11:5), and all the Gentiles who believed, together into one *new* entity—not the nation of Israel, but "the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:12; cf. Rom. 12:5; Eph. 3:6; Col. 1:24).

We know there were a "hundred and twenty" believers initially in that room, and it was an astounding thing that they were part of. We know that they knew of the promise of the arrival of the Holy Spirit, which Jesus had mentioned on that very day that He ascended, but there is no reason to think that they were even remotely prepared for the miracles of the sound, the fire, and the foreign languages.

Look down to Verse 6—"And when this sound occurred, the crowd came together"—like somebody set off a siren, echoing through Jerusalem: "Come, see what this is about!"—"and were bewildered because each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language. They were amazed and astonished, saying, 'Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born?' " This great "crowd" came to find out what was going on.

They promptly snarked about "Galileans." You know, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (Jn. 1:46)—"That's a little tiny village up in the mountains, where the rednecks live! No good thing would come out of Nazareth! These are all Galileans!"

And they *were* all Galileans then, at least the Apostles, because Judas was the only Judean among them, and he was gone, and he had been replaced with another Galilean. So they just thought, "Well, it's impossible that people from that redneck area of Galilee would know other languages!"

All the more *amazing*! You know, if it was a College of Linguistics, maybe you'd think somebody could pull that off. Not so here! But what was going on was undeniable. Skip down to Verse 11—" 'We hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God.' And they all continued in amazement and great perplexity, saying to one another, 'What does this mean?' "

Cue Peter for the sermon that we are going to start looking at today; he is going to explain, "What does this mean?"

"But others were mocking and saying, 'They are full of sweet wine.' " As always, when God does something, there are the ones who ridicule it. People who don't believe what they see or hear about God are quick to dismiss it with a joke, or to demean the people who make them uncomfortable with their message; and in this case, the mockers accused the Apostles and all the others of being drunk.

Well, that's where we are going to put in today—at that scene. Chapter 2, Verses 14 through 36 is the first evangelistic sermon recorded in the Book of Acts; and today, we are going to get through Verse 23. Maybe next time, the rest of the sermon—but I reserve the right to give up on that idea. But today, Verses 14 through 23.

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It's pretty easy to outline it:

Number 1: This Is Really Important (vs. 14)  
Number 2: This Is Not What You Suppose (vs. 15)  
Number 3: This Is From The Prophet Joel (vs. 16)  
Number 4: This Is God's Plan (vss. 17-21)  
Number 5: This Is About Jesus (vss. 22-23)  
And why is it all here? So, Will You Call On The Lord And Be Saved?

Let's look in at Verse 14: This Is Really Important.

Now, we know Peter—if you have read the Gospels. He was a very strong personality—a strong natural leader, if you will, among the disciples. He was always named first in the lists of them. He was always the first one to speak up—good or bad. We know he hit bottom when he cringed and cursed before a "servant-girl" who said, "Weren't you a follower of Jesus?" the night that He was arrested (Matt. 26:69-75).

But now he has been restored (Lk. 22:32; Jn. 21:15-17); and today, we meet the Spirit-filled version of Peter, who is going to be the number-one spokesman for the early years of this new era.

Now, as eyewitnesses of the risen Christ (1:22), all eleven of the other Apostles stood with him with their full support. I picture them standing as a group, with Peter stepping forward and being *the* speaker.

Chapter 2, Verse 14—"But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice"—that's what you do when there is no amplification, and you have a huge crowd—"and declared to them: 'Men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give heed to my words...'"

Now, you might be wondering, with all of those languages going on, here you have one speaker; what did he speak? Well, we don't know. Most likely, Aramaic; that was the dialect of Hebrew that was the vernacular language of the Jews in that era. But having heard all of these different languages, now it is one speaker, one message.

And he addresses them: "men of Judea"—that refers to the residents of that area: the ones that lived in Jerusalem and the areas surrounding Jerusalem like Bethany, and maybe as far as Bethlehem, a few miles away. And not only them, but "all you who live in Jerusalem"—that refers to the ones who were temporarily living in Jerusalem: the ones who had come from all over to come to the Feast of Pentecost. This happened every year, several times in Jerusalem.

Peter was following normal, polite public protocol when he said: "Let this be known to you and give heed to my words." They had just been saying, "What does this mean? What is going on here?" And so when he says, "Let this be known to you and give heed to my words," Peter is saying, "I'm glad you asked. This is *really* important!"

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This is a sermon that did not need *any* manmade introduction to try to capture the attention of the hearers. There had already been a three-pronged introduction to get the people interested: There was that *mighty* sound (vs. 2); there were those "tongues as of fire" (vs. 3); and a hundred and twenty people stepping out into the crowd, "speaking" *fluently* "of the mighty deeds of God" (vs. 11)—and speaking it fluently in languages they did not know. Yeah—*this is something important!*

Secondly: This Is Not What You Suppose.

Peter and the others had heard what was being said: "What does this mean?" But he starts out with refuting that silly thing the scoffers said: that these people, including the Apostles, were all drunk. Now, I have been around some drunk people. I have never heard them speak eloquently "of the mighty deeds of God"—*especially* not in languages they don't know! They forget the one they *do* know, if they're drunk enough!

It didn't take long to refute this. Verse 15—"For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only the third hour of the day." How does he deal with that? "Well, that's absurd!" It was "only the third hour of the day"—by Jewish reckoning, three hours from sunup; so roughly, nine o'clock in the morning. And even people who *are* drunkards were not usually inebriated so as to do strange things by nine o'clock in the morning—let alone a hundred and twenty of them, all in one place at one time, all doing the same thing, *let alone* declaring "the mighty deeds of God"!

So, This Is Really Important. This Is Not What You Suppose—these people are *not* intoxicated. Number 3—This Is From The Prophet Joel: Verse 16.

What you are going to see this morning—it's one of the most fascinating passages of the New Testament, in many respects; and I'll say a little bit about that later. But I want you to realize: The whole point of this is that this is *another* of the several connections that we have already been seeing between the events of the Book of Acts and the Old Testament Scriptures.

This is important. These people are not drunk. Verse 16—"But this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel." Obviously, Peter—and presumably the other Apostles as well—had already been given special insight from the Holy Spirit concerning what was going on.

And don't you wish that there was a footnote there that would give us the Bible references? *Which* "mighty deeds of God" were they talking about? Well, probably a lot of them; and probably, the people that spoke more than one language might have gotten to hear even more than those who only spoke one or two.

But those were not the *only* things that make the connection, and that show us that this is the next step in unveiling God's plan of redemption. He planned it "before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4; 2 Tim. 1:9; 1 Pet. 1:20; Rev. 13:8; 17:8). He predicted these things that would happen before they did (Is. 46:10; Lk. 24:44; Acts 26:22). He "sent" His "Son" in "the fullness of time" (Gal. 4:4)—at *exactly* the right time (Dan. 9:25), to the *right* place (Mic. 5:2), to be born of the *right* woman (Is. 7:14), on the right day, to do all

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the things that He did (Jn. 4:34; 12:49), to go to the Cross and voluntarily "lay down His life" for sinners (Jn. 10:11; cf. Is. 53:10; Matt. 20:28; Jn. 10:17-18), "rise again" (Mk. 8:31; Jn. 20:9; Acts 17:3), "ascend" to "the Father" (Jn. 20:17)—*it is all one story*; it is *all* connected, and you cannot leave out parts of it and understand the whole (cf. Rom. 8:29-30).

So, This Is Really Important. This Is Not What You Suppose—they're not drunk. This Is From The Prophet Joel. Number 4: This Is God's Plan.

Now, what's going to happen here is: Peter is going to quote Joel 2:28-32. It is one of the most fascinating examples where the Old Testament is quoted in the New Testament, and applied in a powerful way.

Before we read this section—these next five verses—I want to say two things about them:

First of all, you know we preach from the New American Standard Bible here, and that is the version that you will see on the slides when I show these to you. But you will notice: in the New American Standard Bible, it is printed in all-caps; that is to make it clear that the words come directly from the Old Testament. That's a helpful feature that I really appreciate about the New American Standard Bible. You can look at a page, and the all-caps stand out to you. That is just a visual way of portraying to you that *all of this is interconnected!* This is somebody in the New Testament building his message on what is revealed in the Old Testament. It is *all interconnected*—it is *one* story; it is *one* plan (cf. Gen. 3:15; Lk. 24:27; Jn. 5:39).

It is all-caps in your Bible. This is not a text message; Peter was not *shouting*. Well, he "raised his voice" because it was a big crowd.

The second thing about this: In the way that it was revealed to Joel and recorded in his book, it was written in the form of poetry. That means that since the primary characteristic of Hebrew poetry is parallelism, it is written in two-line pairs. Sometimes it's "say something, and then say the same thing again in different words"; or, "say one thing, and then contrast it in different words." Sometimes the parallelism is more sophisticated, like "Line A, Line B; and then repeat the message of B, and then repeat the message of A." There are multiple versions of contrast and chiasm, and other things that you can do with that. But the primary characteristic of it is that it is Hebrew poetry.

Now, when you translate poetry from one language to another, you can get the meanings of the words pretty precisely, but it is impossible to maintain the poetic form; you cannot reduplicate the meter or the rhyme or anything like that; and it is much more difficult, if you will, to verbally translate.

So the best we can do in our English Bibles when we are recording something that is Hebrew poetry is to print it in the line-by-line format, rather than as regular prose. And so that ought to tip you off: If you see things where it is not just in paragraph form, it's line-by-line, it is almost certainly a poetic quotation.

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There are only a few English words that you will find in your translation that Peter wove in among the words of Joel. If you take this passage and compare it—put it in parallel columns: Acts 2:17-21 with Joel 2:28-32, which I did this week—it is identical; he quoted this very, very effectively. And I don't think that he had the other eleven guys with him unfurl a big long scroll of the Book of Joel. He *knew* this. This was part of the Holy Spirit bringing to their minds everything they needed to know (Jn. 14:26).

Alright, we will look at these five verses, and then make some comments. Acts 2:17-21: " 'And it shall be in the last days,' God says, 'That I will pour forth of My Spirit on all mankind; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even on My bondslaves, both men and women, I will in those days pour forth of My Spirit and they shall prophesy. And I will grant wonders in the sky above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke. The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before the great and glorious day of the Lord shall come. And it shall be that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' " So what happened on that day was not a drunken display; it was an important development in the plan of God; it was what was "spoken...through the prophet Joel."

It starts out: "in the last days." "Last days" is common Old Testament terminology pointing to the time when the Messiah would come to set up His Kingdom (e.g., Is. 2:2). You heard Jesus in Matthew 12:32 refer to the fact that this "shall not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come"—meaning: now, or in the Kingdom (cf. Eph. 1:21; Heb. 6:5). Their perspective was: There is "this age," Messiah comes, and the Kingdom comes with Him (cf. Dan. 7:13-14; Zech. 14:1-9; Matt. 25:31-34; Rev. 19:11-21; 20:1-6). So, "the last days" is when Messiah would come and set up His Kingdom.

Peter is making this point that the arrival of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost is an *essential step* in the development of the kingdom program of God. Now, no one in those days—including the prophets themselves, and here in the time of the Apostles—clearly understood that there would be *two comings* of the Messiah, and that there would be a *long time* between them. First Peter Chapter 1 even mentions—especially, I think he's referring to Isaiah; he writes about Messiah coming: He is going to be this *glorious* King (e.g., Is. 9:6-7); but he writes about Messiah coming: He is going to be the Suffering Servant who is crucified (e.g., Is. 53:1-12). Which *is* it? Both! Two comings—two different things: to accomplish the work of redemption; to bring the Kingdom to Earth. But that wasn't revealed until the New Testament (cf. Col. 1:26).

Now we live in that in-between era, appropriately known as the Church Age (cf. Acts 15:14-18). But Jesus coming to Earth ushered in "the last days" (e.g., Hos. 3:5; Heb. 1:2; Jas. 5:3). "The last days" have lasted now more than 2,000 years (cf. 1 Cor. 10:11). And during this time, God has begun calling Gentiles to salvation, not just Jews (Is. 49:6; Gal. 1:16; 2:8); and He has included the believing Jews with the believing Gentiles (Eph. 3:6)—but when you are a Gentile and you become a Christian, it doesn't mean you get an Israeli passport; Jew and Gentile together become the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:28; Eph. 2:16; Col. 3:11). And at the same time, while He is doing that, He is chastening Israel for her unbelief (Lk. 13:35).

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Now, as you read Joel's prophecy, understand: It will *not* be completely fulfilled *until* the Millennial Kingdom—that "one thousand year" period *following* the Second Coming of Jesus (Rev. 19:11-21; 20:4-6). But what happened on that Day of Pentecost *was* a step in the development toward that Kingdom coming to Earth; this was just a *sample* of the power of the Holy Spirit that will be normal in the Kingdom. This was a preview, if you will—or, more than just a preview: more like a sampler. It really *was* the power of the Holy Spirit; that really *was* the Holy Spirit enabling them to speak in those languages; that really *was* the Holy Spirit who made the big racket.

So, we're getting this little preview of things, but understand: We in this era, between the First Coming of Christ and the Second Coming of Christ—He is the "King" (Jn. 18:37); He is "the King of kings and Lord of lords" (1 Tim. 6:15), who will set up the Kingdom on Earth (Matt. 19:28); but right now, the King is not present. So many of Jesus' parables have to do with *this* era of the Kingdom of God, when the King is away and He *will* come back (Lk. 19:12). But we who now put our faith in this Savior, the ones who are indwelt by this Holy Spirit—we have a *foretaste* of Kingdom life.

Our status now is what the Apostle Paul wrote about in Colossians 1:13-14—"For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son..." But you say, "Wait a second! He's not here! He's not sitting on His throne in Jerusalem! This isn't the Kingdom!" No, but I'm a "citizen" of it (Phil. 3:20; cf. 2 Thess. 1:5). So we are now "ambassadors" for a foreign entity—the Kingdom (2 Cor. 5:20). We have been "transferred...to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." We have the *spiritual* blessings of the New Covenant; we have the *spiritual* blessings that will be *fully* manifested in the Kingdom. And in His Millennial Kingdom, God "will pour forth of [His] Spirit on"—and notice, he says "all mankind," because it's going to be Jews *and* Gentiles.

Now, it's *also* clear, as you read through Joel's prophecy here, that the things Joel mentioned are *not* all fulfilled in this age. We don't know what all kinds of "prophesyings" and "dreams" and "visions" will be more commonplace during the Millennium. We know that there was prophecy in the Early Church, but that revelatory kind of prophecy has ceased for now; that gift of "tongues" has "ceased" for now (1 Cor. 13:8), and there is a reason for that, explained in First Corinthians 13.

But we also know that we have not seen the "wonders in the sky above" and the "signs on the earth below." He is not talking about beautiful sunrises and sunsets and majestic vistas. Those "wonders" did not happen at Pentecost. There was no "blood and fire, and vapor of smoke." There was the "tongues as of fire," but he is talking about real fire. "The sun" was not "turned into darkness," nor was "the moon" turned "into blood." Those phenomena are yet to come with what Joel calls "the great and glorious day of the Lord" (cf. Matt. 24:29; Rev. 6:12; 8:12).

So, "last days"—that's when the Messiah comes: the King is here. "The day of the Lord" is a phrase that is used several different ways in the New Testament, but there is an overarching theme to them: It's the "day" when "the Lord" takes over—"the day of the Lord" (e.g., Is. 13:6, 9; Ezek. 30:3; Obad. 15).

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"The day of the Lord" is sometimes used in certain passages to refer to some time when God does a certain kind of judging; but the way it is used in this passage, it is directly related to the things that will happen at the Second Coming of Christ (2 Thess. 1:7-10; 2:1-2). Jesus is the Lord, and when He is unveiled, what a day that is! (e.g., Rev. 1:7) You might even call that "the day of the Lord."

But it is probably broader than that. If you check out the celestial miracles that are going to happen when Jesus returns—Matthew 24 and Revelation 19—*aha!* It sounds *a whole lot* like what Joel was referring to. Same King, all part of the same plan; something new is happening now.

There are several uses of "day of the Lord," as I said, but I think you'll do fine if you think of it as: "The great and glorious day of the Lord" begins with the next event on God's calendar: the Rapture of the Church—He removes His people from the Earth (1 Thess. 4:16-17). Then the Seventieth Week of Daniel, the "Tribulation" time (Dan. 9:27; Matt. 24:21), building up to the Second Coming of Christ (Zech. 14:3-4; Matt. 24:29-30) and the Millennial Kingdom on "earth" (Zech. 14:9; cf. Matt. 25:31, 24), the "Great White Throne" judgment (Rev. 20:11-15), and the setting up of the "new heavens" and the "new earth" (2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1). Roll all that together and stick it under the label of "the great and glorious day of the Lord," and I think you'll have a pretty good understanding.

So, another observation about this extended quotation from Joel is that Peter stopped *before* the part where Joel predicts the final redemption of the Nation of Israel and the judgment of all nations. In Joel, it's the end of a chapter, but forget the chapter break; that wasn't there when Joel wrote it. Peter stopped there, so all of those prophecies given through Joel will be *completely* fulfilled when the Kingdom comes; and Peter is saying, "Here's your sampler. Here's your little appetizer of what is to come."

Now, it is quite easy to get caught up in dissecting this use of the Old Testament in the New Testament by Peter. People argue about what is fulfilled, what is not fulfilled, what is merely pictured, what might be fulfilled in different ways at different times. Some people use the terminology "*pre*fillment" and "*ful*fillment," or "partial fulfillment" and "total fulfillment," in trying to figure out all the nuances of Peter's use of the Old Testament. And I say: You know, enough ink has already been spilled, enough bandwidth has already been chewed up on that. Let's just get the big picture here.

I urge you to see what Peter did with this quotation. He is saying: The New Covenant *has arrived!* The Old Covenant is now "obsolete" (Heb. 8:13). Christ is beginning to "build" His "Church" (Matt. 16:18); and when we get to the end of this sermon, oh, *wow!* What a kickoff day for the beginning of the Church, "the Body of Christ" (Eph. 4:12; cf. Col. 1:24)!

God is still calling Jews (Rom. 1:16; 11:1-5). The message is still the same: "Repent" and "turn" to "the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21; 26:20). But now, those believing Jews are going to be united into one *new* creation: "the body of Christ" (cf. Jn. 10:16; 11:52; Eph. 2:11-16; 3:6).



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Otherwise, God is showing that He is indeed fulfilling the promise "that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in"—that's the way it is worded in Romans Chapter 11, Verse 25.

So what Peter is saying is: "Guys, *you know* there's this Plan! There *is* going to be the Kingdom on Earth! You know that Jesus was 'crucified' (Matt. 27:35; Gal. 3:1) and 'buried' (1 Cor. 15:4) and He 'rose again' (2 Cor. 5:15) and He 'ascended to the Father' (Jn. 20:17). That *wasn't what you were expecting* without a kingdom on Earth, but *this is* the unrolling of that plan, and you are here on a *crucial day* in all of history to witness this part of it!" *Wow!*

Peter is telling his people: "Men of Judea"—you locals—"all you who live in Jerusalem"—no matter where you came from, for the Day of Pentecost: "This is *exactly* what God has planned, and God's plan is in full force; *it's on schedule!* (cf. Ps. 33:11) Jesus *is* the Messiah! He *is* the King! The Kingdom of God *is* coming! It isn't coming *right now*, in the earthly manifestation you *hoped for*; you don't "know" the "times or epochs" which God has determined (Acts 1:7)—but now you have the Holy Spirit, and 'you will be My witnesses' (Acts 1:8), just as He said."

So, what is Peter saying? "Guys, this is *really important!* This is not a bunch of drunks, as you suppose. This is from the Prophet Joel. This is God's plan."

And Number 5: This Is About Jesus.

It is imperative that we don't stop without the next two verses: Verses 22 and 23—"Men of Israel, listen to these words." Again, he is saying: "Okay, quiet on the set! *This is important!* This is *super-important!* This is *the most important part* of what is so super-important!" "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene"—okay, go ahead and stick a dagger in Him; He's from that hick village up in Galilee!—"Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know..." He did a lot of those miracles right in Jerusalem; He did *even more* in Galilee; He did *more* over in Perea; He did some around the Decapolis; He even did some on Gentile turf. Everybody that knew *anything* about Jesus had at least *heard* of the miracles, if not *witnessed* them (cf. Jn. 5:36). And of course, the leaders of the Jews said: "All by the power of Satan!" "This Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death."

Peter is saying: "*Get the message! Get the message!* This is the next step in the unfolding of God's plan of redemption! It's *not* a shock...well, it might be a shock, but it wasn't without being *predicted*. And *make no mistake about it:* I know you heard that sound, and wondered if a tornado was ripping through this side of Jerusalem. If you were close enough to see it, you saw what looked like 'tongues as of fire' resting on all 'hundred and twenty' of us. I know you heard about 'the mighty deeds of God,' and you heard them *in your own language* from people who *don't know* your own language! This is glorious! But *make no mistake:* *This is about Jesus!* You *cannot* ignore Him and have *any part* in the Kingdom of God (cf. 1 Tim. 2:25; 1 Jn. 2:23)! He is the *one and only* way

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to God (Acts 4:12)—"*the way...the truth...the life; no one* comes to the Father but through" Him (Jn. 14:6). Don't sneer about His roots in Galilee, even if you think there is nothing there except a bunch of uneducated rednecks. Don't dismiss the eternal significance of all of those 'miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him'—*all* of which attested to Jesus' deity (Jn. 10:25). Don't forget: It was *your* spiritual leaders who rejected Him and 'delivered' Him 'over' to be crucified, and *that* is why God is now turning primarily to the Gentiles (Matt. 23:37-38; cf. Acts 13:46). This was *all done*—remember, it's connected—according to '*the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God.*' "

"Predetermined plan" is a combination of two Greek words that means that God marked this off as His plan according to His own "counsel" (Eph. 1:11), which He set "before the foundation of the world" (1 Pet. 1:20; cf. Rev. 13:8).

One of the words here: "predetermined"—our word "horizon" comes from it. *Horizō* is to "mark off the horizon": "That's where we're going." You know, you're driving across a *long, long, straight, flat road*; and there's the point at which your vision runs out—you can't see past it. God sets the point where the road is going to take us.

This *is* the plan of God, and *don't mistake it: It all runs through Jesus!* There is *no hope* for *anyone* who rejects Him (Jn. 3:18, 36)! It is the *one plan of God!*

Now, this Jesus who came—who *was* the King, who *is* the King, who did *all* of those great miracles—He was "delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God," and what happened? "You nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death." We will come back to that phrase in later sermons.

But understand: This was also according to the "foreknowledge of God." Now, "predetermined plan": setting from afar off what the horizon is. "Foreknowledge of God"—"foreknowledge" is a fancy word that means: "to determine a relationship in advance." (see 1 Pet. 1:1-2, 20; cf. Matt. 7:23; Jn. 13:18; Rom. 8:28-29; Gal. 4:9)

A lot of people really cop out on what this word means, and they get it very wrong. "Foreknowledge" *does not mean* that God pulled back the curtains of time, looked into the future, and saw what was going to happen! *He knows that all the time!* He knows "the end from the beginning" (Is. 46:10) because He lives *outside of time* (Rev. 1:4; cf. Ps. 90:4; 2 Pet. 3:8)! God does not have a "tomorrow"! It's all *now*. Let *that* percolate for a while, and you'll have smoke coming out of your ears.

Now, some people who chafe at the Bible's teaching of the Doctrine of Election—which says that God "chose" who will be saved (Eph. 1:4; cf. Jn. 6:37, 44-45, 65; 13:18; 15:16; Acts 13:48; Rom. 8:30; 9:15-16; 2 Thess. 2:13, etc.)—some people don't like that, they fight against it, they argue against it, they reason against it, they make up all kinds of things against it (e.g., Rom. 9:19; cf. Ezek. 18:25; 33:17). Well, *they* say that the "foreknowledge of God" means that He peeked ahead, and He saw who would choose Christ, so He chose them according to that foreknowledge that He gained by looking into the future.

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Now, I understand why people say that. They don't think it's *fair* that God chose; they don't *like* that idea. Some of them extrapolate and say, "Well, that means that there are some people who absolutely cannot be saved, and that Christ did not die for them!"—and the Bible *never says that!* He calls "all men" (Acts 17:30-31; 22:15; 2 Tim. 2:4; Titus 2:11), *everyone*: "Come to Me, *all* who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28; cf. Is. 55:1; Ezek. 33:11; Jn. 3:16; 6:40; 2 Pet. 3:9; Rev. 22:17). So, don't *overstate* what that says!

The Doctrine of Election is the *only* explanation why *any* of us sin-cursed pea brains *ever did* come to faith, because it is *all of Him*; I would not do it on my own (Jn. 6:44-45, 65; cf. Jer. 24:7; Jn. 1:12-13; Acts 13:48; 16:14; 18:27; 1 Cor. 1:30; 2:14; 12:3b; Eph. 2:8; Phil. 1:29; 2 Tim. 2:25-26; 2 Pet. 1:1).

But *that* definition of "foreknowledge"—that He looked ahead and saw who would choose Him—is *forever proven wrong* by this passage! Just *try* to apply it to this passage: God pulled aside the curtains, peeked into the future, and said, "Oh! *Jesus* is going to be the Messiah!" How much sense does *that* make? Well, you can't *change* the meaning of a word to something else!

"To know"—as in, "Adam *knew* Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain" (Gen. 4:1, NKJV)—that sense of knowledge is a loving, personal, knowing relationship (e.g., Am. 3:2, LSB). "Foreknowledge" means predetermining that relationship (1 Pet. 1:20), which God predetermined for *you* if you are in Christ today (cf. Jer. 1:5; 31:3; Rom. 8:29; Gal. 1:15; 2 Tim. 1:9)—and you have *no* explanation for it except: "*God did it!* I could not—and I had *no interest* in trying! *God did it!*"

So, it was *exactly* according to His plan. *He* sent His Son—God the Son; it was Their plan from eternity past—He sent His Son at *exactly* the right time, to come, to die for your sins so that you can be saved (Gal. 4:4-5; cf. Rom. 8:32). It is *all* the plan of God.

Jesus died a totally *undeserved* death (Matt. 3:17; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 7:26; 1 Pet. 2:22; 3:18), brought about at "the hands of godless men and put Him to death." Jesus was the *only innocent man* ever to be killed (cf. Rom. 3:23). "But God raised Him from the dead" (Acts 13:30).

First Corinthians says that the good news—the Gospel—is "that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures" (15:3-4).

The Scriptures, the Scriptures, the Scriptures—God's plan, God's plan, God's plan...from beginning to end, *this event* in Acts Chapter 2 is one of the *spectacular* days in the unfolding of that plan!

We must believe in Him in order to have "life" (Jn. 3:36; 1 Jn. 5:12). Yeah, this is God's plan, and it is about Jesus (Acts 3:20; Col. 1:19-20, 22).

So: Will You Call Upon The Lord And Be Saved?

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Did you catch the punchline of Peter's quote from Joel—the very end of it? It's Joel 2:32 in the Old Testament, Acts 2:21 in our text: "And it shall be that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." "You heard that sound. You ran over here with the crowd. You're saying, 'What does it mean?' *It means you can 'be saved'!*" (Acts 2:40)

Now, keep coming back here to hear the rest of this marvelous sermon of Peter. Go ahead and read it on your own if you'd like. But don't just drink in the beauty of the unity and the connectivity of the whole Bible as one story from beginning to end. Don't leave it there. Don't just say, "Oh, my, that was nice! I learned so much." It is here for *one reason*: You can be saved! (cf. Jn. 20:31; 2 Tim. 3:15)

You may have heard *countless* sermons, but if you have never repented and called on the name of Jesus (Heb. 4:2)—what does that mean? The name of Jesus is everything that He stands for. It is calling on *Him* to save you, because *you can't!* If you outstripped every human being that has *ever lived*, in the category of good works, you would fall *infinitely short* of being *good enough*, if you have *ever once sinned*—and you have done that, probably since the sun came up (Jas. 2:10; cf. Ecc. 7:20; Rom. 3:23; Gal. 3:10).

Understand: It is *His work!* Call out to Jesus Christ to save you from your sin *and its just penalty*—which you deserve, which I deserve (Is. 3:11; Rom. 1:18).

Now, I couldn't resist it last time we were in Acts; I can't resist it again today. Maybe next week, we'll get to it; but would you skip down to Verses 38 and 39? After the rest of his sermon, it says these people were "cut to the quick" (Acts 5:33; 7:54)—I like the King-Jamesy sound of that—"pierced to the heart," understanding: We have a *sin problem!* We need a *Savior!* "What shall we do?" (vs. 37)

And that's where we have this in Acts 2:38-39—"Peter said to them, 'Repent'"—and that is an aorist active imperative, which doesn't mean a *thing* to you, but that is the most urgent kind of command (e.g., Mk. 1:15; cf. Is. 55:1, 6-7; Acts 17:30-31). You can say, "It's a *good idea* to repent. You *should* repent. I *urge* you to repent." No, this is saying: "Repent! You! Now! Today! *This is the day!*" Like Hebrews says: "Today" is "the day of salvation" (Heb. 3:7, 13, 15; 2 Cor. 6:2). If you don't stand a hundred percent, relying on Christ and Him alone and *nothing else* to save you from the penalty you deserve—which is an eternity in "the lake of fire," being "tormented day and night, forever and ever" (Rev. 20:10)—if you don't know for sure that's not your destiny, you're not in Christ: *Today is the day! Call on the name of the Lord!*

And if you have—oh, what good news do we have to tell the people that are still headed for that horrible Lake of Fire! "Repent, and each of you"—you can't get there on anybody else's coattails—"each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus"—we'll talk about that; they just saw the Baptism of the Holy Spirit—"be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Do you think it was miraculous, what those people were doing? You can have that same Holy Spirit! "For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself."

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Now, you can see a subtlety there: "you and your children..." He is talking to the "men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem"—to you Jews now, *and—exact same message—* "for all who are far off"—who is that? That's all the Gentiles! (Eph. 2:11-13) And, my friends, if you didn't know that you were mentioned in the Bible, you are, and there's one place right there: "you who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself."

We are about 6,000 miles from that place. We are 20 centuries from that time. We are "far off," and *today*, God is calling *every single one* here who has not already put their trust in Christ: Repent! Put your faith in the Savior, and you, too, "will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Have you done that? Today is *the very best day* to be saved. Will you "call on the Lord"? (2 Tim. 2:22; cf. Ps. 145:18)

Let's pray:

*Yes, Father, we call on You. We know "all have sinned and fallen short of Your glory." We know "the wages of our sin is death"—that is what we deserve. But "Christ died" in our place "while we were yet sinners." Oh, Father, today—the perfect day for someone here to "call on the Lord," the Lord Jesus Christ: Your Son, our Savior. And even we who have called on You—today is the perfect day for us to be reminded that it is all of You; it is all Your work; we cannot save ourselves! And remind us, too, that the invitation is universal; so send us from this place with the message of the good news of our Savior, Jesus Christ, who died for our sins, that we might have eternal life. Have Your way with us all, we pray, in Jesus' name. Amen.*