

The Untoward Generation – Acts 2:22-41

I. Introduction:

- A. We are being told these days that unless we have a “G5 phone” we are antiquated – nearly dinosaurs.
1. The “G” in “G5” refers to the 5th **GENERATION** of cell phone – engineered, we are told, to greatly increase the speed and responsiveness of wireless networks.
 2. I can remember way back in the **spring of 2015** when the first **G4** was brought out.
 3. I’m feeling old – more and more old all the time.
- B. There is **other kind** of talk about “generations” these days, and it has little to do with family genealogies.
1. We have generations of **phones** and **computers** – and even **groups of people**.
 2. Perhaps you have heard of the people called “Generation X” or “Gen-X.”
 - a. Do you know who belongs to that so-called “generation?”
 - b. It includes people born between 1965 and 1980 – the “Gen-X” people are now 40 to 55 years old.
 3. I am a part of the “Baby Boomer Generation” because I was born in 1949.
 4. Who comes up with these terms? They don’t make a lot of sense.
 5. Take as a perfect example, the “Millennial Generation.”
 - a. The “Millennials” had to be born at least 4 years before the close of the last millennium.
 - b. Kids born during the year 2000 are actually of the “Z Generation.”
 - c. And following “Generation Z” comes the “Generation Alpha.”
 - d. I would think that the **FIRST** letter of the **Greek alphabet** would come **before**, not after, the **LAST letter** of the English alphabet. “Alpha” should precede “Zed.”
 6. Again I ask you, who comes up with these ridiculous designations?
 7. They certainly don’t come out of the Word of God.
- C. But in contrast to them, I would like to point to **one generational term** which **DOES** come from the **Bible**.
1. On Israel’s greatest of all Pentecosts, Peter exhorted a vast number of mostly middle-aged people – to “**save themselves from (the) UNTOWARD generation.**”
 2. How many times have you read those words but didn’t stop to look up the meaning of “untoward?”
 3. Or maybe you did once, but the definition didn’t stick, and it didn’t immediately pop into your head this morning. It is not commonly used today.
 4. I have never heard anyone in a restaurant or on the street speak of the “Untoward generation.”
 5. I have heard of the “Me Generation,” but never of the “U generation.”
- D. I would like draw your attention to this “untoward generation” from which people need to be saved.
1. There are dozens of important messages and lessons in the thirteen verses which I read this morning.
 2. But I’d like us to concentrate on those coming from **verse 40 –**
 3. “**And with many other words did (Peter) testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.**”

II. The untoward generation has a problem – a huge **PROBLEM**.

- A. Have you ever heard of **Scoliosis**?
1. Scoliosis is a sideways curvature of the spine, which sometimes develops in children just before puberty.
 2. The cause of this form of scoliosis is a mystery, and usually it is not a life-threatening problem.
 3. But sometimes scoliosis coincides with **cerebral palsy** or **muscular dystrophy**, creating very severe deformities and intense pain.
 4. Surgeries are required – where one or two rods are inserted, running along the spine in an effort to keep it from bending.
 5. Sometimes daily wear and tear and the pressure of the curving spine can snap those rods, requiring more pain and more surgeries.

- B. When Peter was preaching on that day, he used the Greek word source for that debilitating disease.
1. Peter spoke of the “*skolios*” (*skol-ee-os*) *generation*.”
 2. The word is found in **three other verses** of the New Testament.
 3. In Peter’s **First Epistle** – he exhorts Christian slaves – “*Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the FROWARD – (skolios).*”
 4. That doesn’t help us to understand the meaning, because “*froward*” is not commonly spoken in Spokane.
- C. But Paul & John the Baptist help a bit more in our King James translations of **Luke 3:5** & **Philippians 2:15**.
1. **John** quotes **Isaiah 40** saying, “*As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.*
 - a. *Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the CROOKED shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth;*
 - b. *And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.*”
 - c. The word “**crooked**” is “*skolios*” (*skol-ee-os*).
 2. And **Paul** exhorted the brethren in **Philippi** saying, “*Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a CROOKED and perverse nation, (a perverted nation) among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life.*”
- D. The people of Jerusalem in Peter’s day lived in the midst of a crooked and perverted generation.
1. **And so do you.** Peter’s exhortation is **as relevant** today as it was 2,000 years ago.
 2. In fact, ever since the sin of Adam, **every generation** has been “*untoward*” – crooked and perverse in the sight of God. And herein is the problem – the big problem.
- E. It didn’t happen this way, but if we use our imaginations just a bit, we should be able to see it.
1. In **Genesis 13** we read, “*Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom. But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly.*”
 2. Lot first tented in the valley near Sodom, but eventually he moved into town and bought a nice house.
 - a. “*But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly.*”
 - b. They were perverse and crooked – **scoliofied**.
 3. It didn’t happen this way, but can’t you picture Abraham, like Peter, visiting his nephew, “*and with many words ... testifying and exhorting, Save yourself from this untoward generation.*”
 4. As you know, **Lot reluctantly DID save himself**, just before the wrath of God was poured out on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.
 5. There was general judgment and destruction on all the people of the cities on the plain, and Lot and his family would have been consumed in the conflagration, if he had not taken steps to save himself.
- F. Another example can be envisioned in an even earlier day – the days of **Noah**.
1. **Genesis 6:5** – “*And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*
 - a. *And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.*
 - b. *And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.*
 - c. *But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.*”
 2. **Verse 11** says, “*The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.*”
 3. The Creator of all things looked at humanity and saw an “**untoward generation**” – twisted, corrupt and perverse.
 4. But by the sovereign grace of God, Noah was born again – given a new heart – he was given faith to trust what Jehovah was telling him. He believed God enough to begin his huge nautical construction project.

5. The Bible doesn't tell us this, but for centuries preachers have ascribed to Noah an evangelical heart.
 - a. We imagine the grandson of Methuselah telling his neighbors that judgment was coming.
 - b. I can imagine him, like Peter, with a huge crowd of **curious, contentious, cajoling** people in front of him, *"with many words ... testifying and exhorting, Save yourselves from this untoward generation."*
6. But even more appropriately, Noah spent time telling his sons and their wives, *"Save yourselves from this crooked and perverse generation."*

G. And why was this so important? You know the answer. **Genesis 7:11** –

1. *"In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.*
2. *And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights."*
3. **Verse 21** – *"And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man:*
4. *All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died.*
5. *And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark."*
6. Noah and his family were spared from the universal judgment of God on the world, because they saved themselves from that crooked generation.

H. I am here to tell you that our generations – X, Y, Z and Alpha, are equally **"untoward"** in the sight of God.

1. The Lord Jesus once pointed to the generations of Noah and Lot, saying that those days were no different from the one which will inhabit the earth when He will return in judgment.
2. Christ didn't exactly say that **ours** is a day like that of Noah, but He inferred it.
3. **Luke 17:26** – *"As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.*
 - a. *They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.*
 - b. *Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded;*
 - c. *But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed."*
4. We are living in the **renaissance** of Sodom and Gomorrah.
5. We are surrounded by the wickedness described in **Genesis 13**.
6. The careless, God-less, normal characteristics of Noah's day surround us as well – **Genesis 6**.
7. If **YOU** don't *"save yourself from this untoward generation"* then the moment God's saints are behind the closed door of God's ark, you will experience the rain of God's judgmental fire and brimstone.

III. The untoward generation is facing a cataclysmic problem, but there is a SOLUTION.

- A. Let me say right off the bat that Peter may sound like an Arminian – a preacher of man-centered salvation – but he was not, and I am not.
 1. It sounds as if he was saying that the people of Jerusalem were personally responsible for their deliverance from God's judgment – their salvation from sin.
 2. But I assure you, despite the verbiage, that was not the case.
 3. Peter, as a good preacher of the gospel, was leaning toward the human responsibility in salvation.
 - a. He was not teaching a class at the Jerusalem Baptist Bible Seminary.
 - b. He was preaching the gospel to people who could barely see beyond the end of their nose.
 4. Hopefully, I can clarify that as we move along.
- B. The first step in *"saving ourselves from this untoward generation"* is to understand that **we** are a **part** of that **generation**.

1. I am a *"Baby Boomer,"* and you may be a part of *"Generation X"* or a *"Millennial"* – even though neither of us ever use the terms – we might even deny the terms.
 - a. And like it or not – loudly deny it if you like – you and I are **residents of New Sodom.**
 2. And **Genesis 6:5** is as true today as it was in the days of Noah – *"GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."*
 3. How many times in recent years has a **new TV series** been aired, and you thought, *"This is pretty good,"* but by the 3rd or 4th episode, their homosexual or racial agenda emerged, or the language deteriorated, or their jokes became disgustingly vulgar? Our society is untoward and perverse.
 4. How many **politicians** sounded conservative when they were running for city councilman, but when they got to Washington their true liberalism was displayed? Our **government** is untoward and perverse.
 5. It used to be that only the mafia sold **pornography** and **dope**, now the government and the corner store serve up all kinds of disastrous vice.
 6. And how the state of **religion** has fallen.
 - a. Churches used to have doctrines, but now they have exchanged them for social agendas.
 - b. Whole denominations have succumb to the whims of the *"untoward generation."*
 - c. Their sermons are about racial equality rather than sin; about saving the environment rather than saving of souls.
 7. *"And with many other words did (Peter) testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation."*
 8. The first step in saving ourselves from this *"untoward generation"* is recognizing that we are a part of it.
 - a. But we are not just surrounded by it, we are a part of it; we are infused with it.
 - b. We are all born sinners – crooked and perverse in the sight of God.
- C. Second, we must see our **Creator's relationship** to this **generation**.
1. **Genesis 6:5** – *"And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."*
 - a. *And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart."*
 - b. So God destroyed with rain every man, woman, child, pet doggy, pet kitty and every other living thing.
 - c. It is because Jehovah hates the *"untoward generation."*
 2. And then in **Genesis 17** God sent a different kind of rain down upon the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.
 3. *"Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven; And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground."*
- D. And by the way, God did the same thing to the *"untoward generation"* of Peter's day.
1. Titus, a future Roman Emperor began a siege of Jerusalem on April 14, 70 AD, three days before that year's Passover.
 2. The siege lasted for about five months, ending in August when the Romans then entered and sacked the Lower City. The conquest of Judah was complete by early September.
 3. According to Josephus, 1.1 million civilians died, as a result of the warfare and starvation.
 4. But here is a special lesson – they were not all from Israel, residents of Jerusalem.
 5. Many of the casualties were Jews from elsewhere in the world who had traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover, but instead they were trapped in the vise of God's judgment.
 6. It might be argued that they didn't belong to that Jerusalem generation, but the fact was – they were there.
 7. *"And with many other words did (Peter) testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation."*
- E. Can we be more specific? **How** can we save ourselves from our version of the *"untoward generation?"*
1. Listen to Peter's Spirit-led explanation.
 2. Built on the foundation of God's holy wrath and man's untoward sinfulness, Peter turned to the death, burial

and resurrection of the Saviour.

- a. **Acts 3:22** – *“Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:*
 - b. *Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:*
 - c. *Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.”*
 3. The **untoward generation** in which those people lived, **crucified** the Son of God.
 4. And the untoward generation **in which we live** would love to **keep Christ dead**.
- F. Later both Peter and Paul explain Jesus’ crucifixion more fully.
1. **Paul** said, *“For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.”* Christ died for our sins.
 2. He *“gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity...”* – **Titus 2:14**
 3. *“Christ hath redeemed us from (the curse against us) – the curse of the law”* – **Galatians 3:13**.
 4. *“Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just of the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.”* – **I Peter 3:18**
 5. *“His own self bear our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being death to sins, should live unto righteousness by whose stripes ye were healed”* – **I Peter 2:24**.
 6. He *“gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world (this untoward generation), according to the will of God our Father”* – **Galatians 1:4**.
- G. Christ Jesus has done all the heavy lifting when it comes to our salvation from God’s judgment.
1. He bore the sins of those He intended to save. He became a curse for us, dying on a cross.
 2. His atoning blood was sprinkled on the Mercy Seat, carrying the specific names of those He was saving.
 3. Jesus did it all.
- H. *“Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?”*
1. *Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”*
 2. What must **WE** do to save ourselves from our untoward generation? **WE** must **repent**.
 3. Under the Holy Spirit’s blessing and direction, we must have a change of heart and mind in regard to sin and our inclusion in this untoward generation.
 4. Rather than relishing and enjoying the waywardness of sin, we must recognize it for what it is – rebellion against God.
 5. We must be willing to turn from our spiritual crookedness toward the straightness of God and His holiness.
- I. And because we are entrapped in this untoward generation and our personal sinful perverseness, we must **trust the Saviour for deliverance**.
1. You have the responsibility to **believe** on the Lord Jesus Christ.
 2. *“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:*
 - a. *That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.*
 - b. *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.”*
 3. *“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”*
 4. Without that faith and restful trust in Christ, souls remain in the untoward generation and the *“wrath of God*

abideth on them.”

5. Only Christ has the authority and ability to actually deliver us.
 6. The Bible was written *“that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name.”*
 7. Herein lays the means to escape the *“untoward generation”* – **repentance** before God and **faith** towards the Lord Jesus Christ – **Acts 20:21**.
- J. But Peter added one more thing – something which confuses a great many people.
1. *“And with many other words did (Peter) testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.”*
 2. *“Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?”*
 3. *Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”*
- K. **How** does **baptism enter** into our **escape** from this *“untoward generation.”*
1. Paul once wrote – within the context of contrasting Christ with Belial, believers and infidels, the temple of God and idols – *“as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*
 - a. *Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,*
 - b. *And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”*
 2. **When** a person is **baptized**, he **declares** that he is no longer a part of the *“untoward generation.”*
 3. When a person is baptized, he **burns his bridges** with Sodom and Gomorrah.
 4. Especially in the past, when a person was immersed in baptism, he was writing his own death warrant.
 5. It was the ultimate open and visual **act of separation** from the *“untoward generation.”*
 6. Baptism itself doesn't wash away sin or guilt; it is not a direct part in a person's salvation.
 7. Rather, it is a statement made before God and to the Satan-driven *“untoward generation”* that the believer is now dead to that generation.
- L. If you are still a part of the *“untoward generation”* then I urge you to look to the skies and smell the incoming brimstone. You are on a collision course with the wrath of God.
1. *“Save yourselves from this untoward generation.”*
 2. And if you have seen yourself as a wrath-deserving sinner, but God has given you faith in the finished work of Christ, then I urge you to take that testimonial step – be baptized.
 3. *“And with many other words did (Peter) testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.”*
 4. *“Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?”*
 5. *Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”*
- M. It is with repentance and faith that we prove to ourselves that we are of the generation called the *“children of God.”*
1. And it is with baptism that we declare to the world that we are children of God.
 2. Is your trust in Christ for salvation? Have you saved yourself from this *“untoward generation”* by faith?
 3. Then you need to begin to serve the Lord and openly serve your new King and Saviour.