

Born to Win

About Pentecost

by Ronald L. Dart

Today is Sabbath number six of the cycle leading up to Pentecost. Or, putting it another way, it's day 42 since the Omer or the wave sheaf [**Leviticus 23:15–16; Deuteronomy 16:9–10**].

I look back to the first century, and I can't help wondering what Jesus' disciples were thinking about this time. Going back to Luke the 24th chapter, this is some of the last occasions when Jesus was with his disciples. He says in verse 44,

Luke 24

AKJV

⁴⁴ And he said to them, These are the words which I spoke to you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.

⁴⁵ Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,

There were *numerous* places, through the Psalms, and through the prophets, and through the Law itself where he was prophesied.

Luke 24

AKJV

⁴⁶ And said to them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

⁴⁷ And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Now, the disciples could never say that they were not told, because from the very beginning...I mean not from the beginning of Jesus' ministry, but from the time he began to commission them for his departure and for their work, he kept telling them, "Go you into all the world. Take the gospel into all nations." Again and again. And he said,

Luke 24

AKJV

⁴⁸ And you are witnesses of these things.

⁴⁹ And, behold, I send the promise of my Father on you: but tarry you in the city of Jerusalem, until you be endued with power from on high.

Now, there is no explanation of this; and frankly, when you get through reading the accounts of the events, you have to realize that the disciples had *no idea* what he was talking about. And one wonders, as they came down to this particular day, what they expected, what they anticipated. He didn't even tell

them with any specificity that it was going to be *on Pentecost* at all. I think they might have assumed that—understanding the historical importance of Pentecost, understanding what the tradition was of their people: that that’s the time when God came down on Mount Sinai and gave the Ten Commandments. They *probably* expected whatever was to happen to happen on or about Pentecost. But he said, “Stay there...”

Luke 24

AKJV

⁴⁹ [...] until you be endued with power from on high.

⁵⁰ And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them.

⁵¹ And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.

⁵² And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy[.]

Now, if you’ll just page over past John to the Book of Acts, Luke picks up his story, and there’s a little more detail in it this time. It says in Luke, chapter 1,

Acts 1

KJ2000

¹ The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,

² Until the day in which he was taken up, after he through the Holy Spirit had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:

³ To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, [...]

Now, in reading Luke’s account, it almost sounds like the ascension took place just a day or two...I mean almost *immediately* after the first or second time that he saw his disciples. And it really wasn’t that way. Luke’s account is somewhat truncated, I believe, because we do learn that the last contact he had with him was *40 days* after his resurrection [Acts 1:3]. That would have placed it two days ago. Two days ago the events that are described here in Acts, the 1st chapter, in that year took place. He said in verse 4,

Acts 1

KJ2000

⁴ And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, said he, you have heard of me.

⁵ For John truly baptized with water; but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.

Now, it may be that he explained what that meant to them, but not knowing anything about the events following in the Book of Acts, what in the world would you have thought that that meant? “You will be endued with the power of the Holy Spirit.” Presumably, I guess you would have thought that maybe you would be able to heal the sick as Jesus did, that you could perform *some* types of miracles; but I honestly don’t think the apostles or the disciples *really* quite grasped what was coming. He then went on to say,

Acts 1

AKJV

⁶ When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, will you at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

Now, they really did not grasp all that was involved in this. They did not understand the time element involved. They actually did not fully understand what the Messiah *was to do*. Now, it is fascinating that, in recent years, they have learned through the Dead Sea Scrolls that there *was* a sect of Judaism, and that there *was* a school of thought among Jews of the time, that the Messiah *would* suffer and that the Messiah *would* die. And it was based firmly on the Old Testament scriptures that *we* use that tell us that the Messiah will come, will suffer, and will die. And there are references in the Gospels to the fact that...which we're going to come to in a moment...a reference in the Gospels and in the Psalms, that make it very clear that Messiah was to be *resurrected* from the dead. And in order to be resurrected from the dead, you've got to die. But the disciples obviously were not part of the Qumran sect, because *they* understood that the Messiah was to come to rule. And so once he had died, had been resurrected, *now* we come to this point of time, and they say, "Are you *now* going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" What *they* understood, and what *they* grasped...you know, was a different matter entirely. He says,

Acts 1

KJ2000

⁸ But you shall receive power, after the Holy Spirit has come upon you: and you shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Now, it'd be hard for a child not to understand what that meant. It would be hard *not to* realize that we are in for a long, hard road. It's not going to be one year. It's not going to be two years. Because in order to get to the "uttermost parts of the earth" it's going to take a couple of years. The length of time all of a sudden began to stretch out before them as Jesus told them the job that lay ahead of them.

Acts 1

AKJV

⁹ And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

¹⁰ And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

¹¹ Which also said, You men of Galilee, why stand you gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen him go into heaven.

And, of course, we have long understood the prophecies from the Old Testament to talk about that, in the time of "the day of the Lord"—the time when God will once again come to fight against the nations of the earth who have fought against him—that in that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, *right in the very place* where Jesus ascended. He says, "Just as you have seen him go, you're going to see him come again." And he would come again with clouds—right to the same, *precise* location.

And he was gone. That would have been for them, as I said, two days ago. Now, they would have come together on this day as the custom was. They would have counted off the Omer. Someone would have stood before them and said, "Now, this is day 42 leading up until the Feast of Pentecost." Exactly their terminology, I'm not sure, but they would have known this is the sixth Sabbath, this is the 42nd day. Two days ago, Jesus ascended, and their heads were probably *still* swimming. But they still had a week to go before the events of the 2nd chapter of Acts. And if you'll page over to Acts 2, I'd like to take a little time today to walk through a couple of things, and think about what took place for them on the Feast of Pentecost. Chapter 2, verse 1:

Acts 2

AKJV

¹ And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

² And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

Now, they tell me that a tornado sounds much like a freight train—that you’re sitting close to the track, and the *roar* of the thing going by is a lot like that. I have never been that close. (Mr. Armstrong and Mr. Sharp have, as they held on to the roots of a tree when one went by real close to them by a lake one day. So they *know* what a tornado sounds like.) This is the way it was, I presume, in their description that it came as “a rushing mighty wind”. It filled the whole house where they were sitting. And then as they sat there, across the top of the room, suddenly appeared shimmering (for want of a better term) *fire* [v. 3]. It was almost as though flames of fire licked all across the top of the room, spread out around the room to where all of them were sitting, and came down like a tongue upon each one of the men that were seated there. Every hair on their body, I would assume by this time, would have been standing straight up, straight out; and goose flesh would have been the order of the day. It’s *amazing*... you know, you try to imagine in a situation like that, where you were expecting *something*. You did not really have any way of knowing what; but all of a sudden fire, this *huge* roar, tongues of fire come out and they just sort of descend on *everybody* in the room. It said,

Acts 2

KJ2000

⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Now, I believe by now everyone understands that the expression “tongue” in most languages is synonymous with the term for “expression”. *La langue française* is the French “tongue”, and the word “*langue*” means “tongue”. If you’re going to stick out your tongue at someone, *la langue* is what you stick out at them. If you’re going to taste something with your tongue, you taste it with *la langue*. And *la langue française* is the French language. In fact, our word “language” comes from that same root—that is, the Latin word that comes through the French for “tongue”. *Lingua franca* means the common tongue spoken in an area.

So understand that when he says “tongues”, or “speaking in tongues”, that it really has nothing to do with tongues of fire that came down—that what it is talking about is languages. And the proper translation, frankly, into English of the Greek that you find here is really not tongues, it is languages. They began to speak with other languages as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Acts 2

AKJV

⁵ And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

I mean, is there a nation, is there a language, is there a tongue? *Every single one* of them is there.

Acts 2

AKJV

⁶ Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, [...]

You know, the word spread and everybody began to rush together. I don’t know what change of venue there might have been, or where they were standing. There are some who feel that they were in the temple—that “the house” where they were assembled was the temple where this took place, in one of the rooms or around the temple. But the Bible does not say specifically. I don’t know whether they moved from one place to another, but when this began to take place and people learned that it had happened, word spread like wildfire and people came.

Acts 2

AKJV

⁶ [...] and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.

Now, the astonishing thing...and people have speculated about this for generations. What did this mean? Did this mean that this man is standing here speaking to us. I don't speak his language. I speak Parthian. You speak Median. And *we both* hear him, the same words coming out of his mouth, in our own language. In other words, that the miracle was in the hearing. Or was the miracle in the speaking—so that while we are here, during some of the time I hear him speak Median, sometime you hear him speak Parthian. It's hard...there's no way of knowing with certainty, but the fact that it's called the gift of *languages*, the ability to speak in *languages*, I suspect the miracle was in the speaking; and that at one moment he is speaking to this group of people in Parthian, to another time he's speaking to this group of people in Greek, another group of people in other languages, he goes on down the way. Because this went on *all day long*.

Acts 2

AKJV

⁷ And they were all amazed and marveled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans?

I gather they could tell that by the way that they were dressed.

Acts 2

AKJV

⁸ And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

⁹ Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia,

¹⁰ Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, [...]

In other words, a *local* dialect of Libya around Cyrene.

Acts 2

AKJV

¹⁰ [...] and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,

¹¹ Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

There were 16 represented languages being spoken that day. Now, of course there are a lot more languages than that in the world. (I think there *were* more languages [than] in the world today.) But you know, when you get 16 languages covered, *even today*, you have covered a *huge* portion of the populations of peoples of this world. *Huge*. Because the spread of languages, and the minor dialects that exist in different places, you know, oftentimes fall out of other languages. And so, when you get 16 of them, you know, you have covered a lot. There are human beings walking around who speak six or seven different languages, and they can communicate just about anywhere in the world that they go. These men, apparently, were able to speak in 16. We don't know whether *all* of them spoke in *all* 16; whether some of them spoke in two languages, three languages, or five languages. We have no way of knowing. All we know is that *a miracle* took place on this day, and that these people were able to hear them in these languages.

Now again, it doesn't take somebody with a very high intelligence or a great deal of perception to consider the miracle that has taken place here on this day and say to himself, "You know, I suspect that

this is connected to Jesus' statement that this gospel 'shall be preached in all the world for a witness'. I think this is probably connected to the command, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel.' I think it's probably connected up that 'this gospel shall be preached in my name in *all the world* for a witness', and that you're supposed to *go out there* and do it." I think *anyone* should understand that the gift of the ability to communicate in another language gives me *a clue* as to what I'm supposed to do next. If I woke up tomorrow morning with the gift of the Italian language, and that I could speak fluent Italian—had no difficulty with it all, and amazingly could communicate with anybody instantly, understand a radio broadcast, the whole vocabulary was there. Folks, I would have a clue as to what I was supposed to do next. I would have a very clear understanding of it. Now, *these men, oddly enough, for the longest time*, never went anywhere. They just sandbagged it in Jerusalem. I guess, success...of course, Jerusalem in that day was the crossroads of *all* Judaism (naturally, as it still is) and they came through there in their hundreds and their thousands. So speaking to people of other languages in Jerusalem was a very useful thing; and they probably, for a long time, felt no great need to go anywhere else.

Well, they were all amazed at what these men were doing. And bear in mind, by the way, that this has nothing...it doesn't even resemble what you will run into at a lot of Assembly of God or Pentecostal churches. They aren't just babbling in languages that *no one* understands. These men are speaking in *identifiable, known* languages—*named* languages that people understand. And the *object* of the speaking in languages was communication; not simply some sort of ecstatic experience, but to communicate from one person to another. Notice, these people said that they all heard them speak in their own languages "the wonderful works of God." So they heard it, it was *their* language, and they *understood the content* of what was being spoken in their language. Whatever may be going on in the "speaking in tongues" (or the "tongues") movement in different churches of the world today, it is *not* what happened in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost in AD 31. Now, it goes on to say,

Acts 2

AKJV

¹² And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What means this?

¹³ Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.

"They drank too much of it, and it's gotten to them. It's gone to their heads."

Acts 2

AKJV

¹⁴ But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said to them, You men of Judaea, and all you that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known to you, and listen to my words:

¹⁵ For these are not drunken, as you suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.

"We would have had to started, carried on all night to be drunk."

Acts 2

AKJV

¹⁶ But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;

Now, at this point...and I won't turn back to it, you hardly need to turn back to it; because every word of the relevant prophecy out of Joel is included here. Peter just takes it right off the top of his head, straight out of his memory, and gives them a prophecy out of Joel. Now, some time you might want to read Joel. You might just want to sit down, put your feet up, open it up; start chapter 1, verse 1, and just *read through* the prophet Joel. Joel is writing to a people. He is writing out of a historical context. He is writing to a people who are going into captivity, and going to come out of captivity. He speaks of their

sins, and of the things that they have done, and their rejection of God; and yet how God is going to, having punished them, bring them all back out of it. And when all is said and done, he then lapses into this *very* strong prophecy about the day of the Lord. He describes it as a day—there has never been one like it in history, and there will never be one again—a time unique in *all* of the history of the world. And it *is* a time which, when you get through reading through Joel, you're *absolutely certain* as to what he's talking about. He is talking about the End Time. He is talking about the eschatological Day of the Lord. Eschatology is the study of the end times. The eschatological day of the Lord is the day of the Lord of the end times. It is oftentimes by people who write about the Bible used in those terms, because the expression “day of the Lord” can seem in some cases simply to refer to a time of the day when God's going to do something very dramatic, and that there is more than just one time that is describable as “a day of the Lord” or a time of God's wrath or a time of God's intervention. But there is *one specific* day of the Lord that there has never been one before it like it. There will never be another one like it again. It is that day of the Lord that takes place at the end time. And as you study your way through Joel, there's not much doubt about what *Joel* is talking about.

Now, what is curious about this is that Peter takes that prophecy and says,

Acts 2

AKJV

¹⁶ But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;

¹⁷ And it shall come to pass in the last days [...]

Now, Joel's prophecy (which you see even here in Peter's own citations, and it's very clear Peter isn't taking it out of context)... You'll understand clearly what Peter's expectations were.

Acts 2

AKJV

¹⁶ But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;

¹⁷ And it shall come to pass in the last days, said God, I will pour out of my Spirit on all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

“I will pour out my Spirit”, he says, upon whom? Not upon Jews, not upon Israelites, not upon the descendants of Abraham. “I will pour out my spirit upon *all flesh*.” That's what this speaking in languages had to do with. That's what this gathering together a collection of 16 (which in this time seems to have been in their minds have comprehended the whole world). It was enough languages to reach everybody, everywhere with the gospel. And so here we are at the end time, and God says he's going to pour out his Spirit—not *merely* upon Jews, not *merely* upon Israelites, but upon *all* flesh. He said,

Acts 2

AKJV

¹⁷ [...] and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

¹⁸ And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:

And here we are.

Now, exactly how Peter understood that we will never know. But it *does* seem justifiable to think that Peter, especially realizing as we do, that even after Christ's death, burial, resurrection, and his time with

them for 40 days, they still ask him, “Lord are you going to restore the kingdom at this time to Israel?” Their horizon was very, very close. And so I think it’s reasonable to think that Peter, in seeing this, did not realize that this was only a token, this was only a down payment, this was only *the beginning* of what God was going to do. And Peter *assumed* that these events would lead right on into the eschatological day of the Lord—that end-time day of the Lord. Listen to the way he puts it.

Acts 2

AKJV

¹⁹ And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke:

Now, you put Joel together—these prophecies—with the Book of Revelation, and it’s very clear you’re getting on down to the time of the trumpets being blown, and the plagues of God being poured out. You’re not merely talking about, you know, something that happened in *Peter’s* lifetime. Because *these* events did not. What Peter was seeing was a *type*. And so when he tells the people, “this is that...”, he is giving it to them as a type of what is to come in the future.

Acts 2

AKJV

²⁰ The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and notable day of the Lord come:

²¹ And it shall come to pass, that whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Now, we look forward...and I think it is astonishing in a way, you know, that here on the day of Pentecost this thing takes place, and Peter says, “*This* is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel”, and thereby identifies Pentecost with the day of the Lord, with a time in the future, when the Spirit will be poured out upon all flesh, when there are going to be signs in the heavens above and the earth beneath—blood and fire and vapor of smoke—when the sun is turned into darkness and the moon is turned into blood, and all the remainder of the prophecies that talk about those times begin to come to pass. And he says, “*Whoever* will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.” What is this day about?

Well, you know, in years gone by we would tick off the meaning of the holy days—that, well: Passover, the death of Christ; and the Days of Unleavened Bread, putting sin out of our lives; Pentecost, the receiving of the Holy Spirit; the Feast of Trumpets, the return of Christ. And we made our way on through the the holy days of the year. And I don’t remember really that much being said about *Pentecost* as a day that looked toward the day of the Lord, the return of Christ, the heavenly signs taking place, God’s Spirit being poured out of measure, great power beginning to take place, and salvation being offered to people in their millions. But *that* is part of the meaning of the Feast of Pentecost which we are coming up to next week. It looks *forward*, not back; and this is something which I think has oftentimes been missed. You know, people talk about the fact that they don’t keep the holy days because, “Well, the holy days have been fulfilled.” The *odd* thing about that is that people who believe the holy days have been fulfilled, and therefore they don’t need to keep them, *will* observe the Lord’s Supper. There is *nothing* in the Bible, folks—not one thing in the Bible—that has been *more fulfilled* than the Lord’s Supper (that is, the Passover). Nothing. It pictured Christ’s death. Christ died. It’s over. If we don’t need to keep things that have been fulfilled, *there is no need* to partake of that bread and wine. And yet in fact, Paul makes it very clear that we *do* have to do that, so we can’t very well get away from it, can we? But it’s been fulfilled. Pentecost *has not* been fulfilled, for we are looking ahead to a time when there’s going to be signs in the heavens above and the earth beneath: blood, fire, vapor of smoke. The great and terrible day of the Lord will come and God will pour out his Spirit upon all flesh. Pentecost has not been fulfilled, so I would submit to anybody that holds that particular view they really ought to be keeping *this* day.

You can look upon it as the birthday of the New Testament Church, but *Pentecost looks forward*. Peter did not realize *how far forward* it looked. I think Peter anticipated maybe within months, maybe within two or three years, but *certainly* within his lifetime. I think he expected to *see* those heavenly signs. I expected he expected the blood, and the fire, and the vapor of smoke; and he expected the great and terrible day of the Lord to come before he died. There are hints of this in Paul's letters that he expected it before he died. In fact, I expect that every great preacher of God down through all generations has thought, "It's going to happen before I die." So here we are telling you it's going to happen before we die. I guess we are of an old and honorable tradition, aren't we? You know what's funny? Somewhere, sometime in the history of Man, it *is* going to happen. It *is* going to happen. And there will be preachers out there preaching, "Folks, it's about to happen." And people are going to say, "Oh well, now look. People have been saying that since the first century. Peter thought it was going to come in *his* lifetime. Paul thought it was going to come in *his* lifetime. I expect that every great preacher down through all these years has thought it was coming in his lifetime. *Who are you* to tell me that Jesus Christ is coming back to this earth in my lifetime?" Oh, I'm nobody, but here I am: Jesus is coming back to earth in your lifetime. I think he's coming back in *mine*. (Now, if we start talking about some of you older people here, that's another matter. I don't know about that. But I think Jesus Christ *is* coming back in my lifetime.)

So who's right? Peter was wrong. I'm right. (We'll see, won't we?) But Peter, he wasn't really wrong, and I probably should not say that. He will take me to task for that, no doubt, someday. He wasn't really wrong. He simply did not grasp the timing of everything. But the events that were taking place: the pouring out of God's Spirit upon all flesh—that is, upon those in a measure that had never been seen before in all the history of God's people—this was important, and the change *was* there. And the fact is that *this* day. . . One of the really critical things about Pentecost—another reason why it's hard to imagine why all Christians everywhere don't observe it. . . Many do, by the way. The Church of England does, the Roman Catholic Church does. Many do, but most don't. The odd thing about it is that Pentecost is the crossroads. Pentecost is the place where all those Old Testament scriptures that talked about the conversion of the nations—that is, the conversion of the world, the reaching of the gospel; that is, of the truth of God and the worship of God outside of Palestine. The fact that the time had come when you didn't have to worship God in *this* mountain, but that God looked for people to worship for him in spirit and truth *everywhere*. The fact that the gospel was to be taken to Egypt. The fact that the gospel was to be taken to Ethiopia. The fact that it was to be taken to Parthia. The fact that it would be taken to nations *not known*. This was not even a part of it. I mean, this was the point where the change took place. This is where the gift of tongues was given. This is where the commandments had been given. And what's odd about it is, in the progress of time through the Book of Acts, the disciples *still* didn't get it. You get all the way down to the 8th chapter, and *nobody has gone anywhere*. I don't know how many years have passed, but they're down there baptizing people, just continuously dunking people and building thousands of people into churches around Jerusalem, and not going anywhere; until finally God looked down on them and said, "Well, I guess they're not going to go on their own." And he allowed persecution to arise against the church, and the church was scattered *all over the world* as a result of it. And everywhere they went, they went preaching the gospel. So he managed to get it out.

You know, the Book of Acts is really the story of the transition of the worship of Jehovah from a *national* religion to a religion of *all the world* and of *all Man*. It's a time when God reached out beyond Israel to everyone. And that's the story. It's the point of all of this. And this, even the expressions about pouring out His Spirit upon "all flesh", that "whoever" calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. . . All of these references, we tend to think of them nowadays in a little different terms. You know, you think out of your own world. But if you can just begin to realize how narrow, how *narrow* the mindset of all these people—even Jesus' disciples—were. They had come up in, and had lived in, and the whole world had been a world in which gods were the gods of nations and of peoples. There was a god of the Egyptians, and that was their god. There was a god of the Moabites, and that was their god. There was a god of the Parthians, and that was their god. "And we're Jews, and Jehovah is *our* God." There were people around the Jews that made the mistake, in one case, they said, "Well, look, their god is the god of the hills. Our god is the god of the plains. Let's get them down here in the plains and fight

them and we can beat them.” And when they made that statement, God heard it. So he came down and whipped them in the plains [1 Kings 20]. But the whole thinking was, “God—Jehovah—he is *our* God. The Egyptians’ god is their god.” And so they were having great difficulty in breaking out of that thinking. And so all of these references: the gift of tongues, “go into all the world and make disciples of all nations”, the gospel will be preached everywhere, all the way down to this statement: *whosoever will may come*. This is a statement to make them realize that the gospel had to be able to be available to *all men*, not just to Jews or Israelites—all men, everywhere, whosoever will, no national barriers. All this was for that. Now, Peter said in verse 22,

Acts 2

AKJV

²² You 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 middle of you, [...]

After all, God had shown it. God had made it clear as to what he was doing. So clear, in fact, that within just a very early time in his ministry, Nicodemus comes to him by night and he says,

John 3

AKJV

² [...] Rabbi [*Master*], we know that you are a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that you do, except God be with him.

The confession is made. “We know that you have come from God.” Peter turns around and uses this back at them. He said, “This is...”

Acts 2

AKJV

²² [...] a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the middle of you, as you yourselves also know:

²³ Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

There are two very important statements that are made here in this short passage. One of them is that Jesus was “delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God”. In other words, the death of Christ, his sacrifice, his death on the stake, the suffering that he went through, the torment that he had to endure, the shame, the humiliation, the spitting, the rejection—all of this did not *merely* happen. It was *allowed* to happen. It was *directed* to happen. It was a part of the *determinate counsel*. In other words...I don’t know how you would put it stronger, that God in his wisdom and God in his knowledge had *determined* it, and it was a part of his foreknowledge. Now, God can know the future because God is able to make the future take place; and so through that foreknowledge, and because he had determined that it would happen, Jesus was going to die.

Now, that being the case, since Jesus was going to die, then it wasn’t my fault. I can detach myself from it. I can say, “Well, you know, God did it to him. It wasn’t me. It wasn’t because of me, or I didn’t have that much to do with it.” But then come to the last part of that verse. He said,

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²³ Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

Who killed him? Well, God determined it. God foreknew it. But *you* did it. *You* did it and *you're* responsible for it. Now, in truth, there were really only a tiny handful of people who actually “killed Christ”. There were, of course, a few more accessories before and after the fact. The high priesthood—the priesthood, virtually all be in the Sanhedrin, had to be culpable in the situation. And certainly Pontius Pilate was culpable, and certainly the Roman soldiers that drove the nails in were culpable. And certainly the man that shoved the spear in his side, he was culpable. All of this, we have to understand, these people were in on it. And of course, there was a multitude or a crowd of folks that gathered around and said, “Let him be crucified!” They were in on it. So that all happened. And I suppose you could say then, “All of you who stood there and said, ‘Let him be crucified’, you’re a part of it.” And yet, you know, that was weeks before. And a lot of the people who were in that crowd that said, “Let him be crucified”, probably weren’t even here now. And a lot of people who were in for Pentecost probably were not there for the Days of Unleavened Bread. And he doesn’t say, “*some of you* have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.” He just says, “You have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.”

And you know, the fact of the matter is that mankind, because of the determinate counsel and the foreknowledge of God that Jesus Christ would die, [it] was because of the sins—that is, the wicked hands—of mankind. And that we, *all of us*, are *culpable* in the death of Christ, for God had to determine it, *had to* deliver him in order to somehow rescue us and buy us back from what he knew that you and I would do. First of all, we have Christ’s death established. Then he says,

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²⁴ Whom God has raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be held of it.

²⁵ For David speaks concerning him, [...]

Now, this is really a fascinating little passage of Scripture. He says,

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²⁵ For David speaks concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved:

²⁶ Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope:

²⁷ Because you will not leave my soul in hell, neither will you suffer your Holy One to see corruption.

²⁸ You have made known to me the ways of life; you shall make me full of joy with your countenance.

Now, this is a *direct* quotation—it just reaches back and *lifts* the thing straight out of the Psalms. It’s a fascinating passage, in a sense. What is he talking about? How is a person to understand that? It’s really hard to understand *all* that he might have been doing here, but if you’ll turn back to the...actually I don’t think we really need to turn back to the psalm in question, but David is talking about what God did there. Maybe, in fact, it would be better. Let’s turn back to the 16th psalm. Psalm 16...if I could find my own way back to it. My little markings are fading on my Bible. The 16th psalm. I think it’s a good idea to kind of look at this in its context, to understand how his readers (his listeners, I should say) might have responded to what he was saying. It’s the 16th psalm. He says,

Psalm 16

AKJV

- ¹ Preserve me, O God: for in you do I put my trust.
- ² O my soul, you have said to the LORD, You are my Lord: my goodness extends not to you;
- ³ But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.
- ⁴ Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god: their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips.
- ⁵ The LORD is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup: you maintain my lot.
- ⁶ The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places; yes, I have a goodly heritage.

Now, keep in mind as we read these things that here is a man sitting in his palace with a harp, and composing as David did. The New Testament writers tell us categorically (and, in fact, we will read it in Peter's speech) that David was a *prophet*, which means he spoke out of the inspiration of God, and that David saw things that David himself really did not understand. But he *was* God's anointed. In a sense, David himself *was* a messiah; because the word "messiah" simply means "anointed", and every king of Israel was anointed. David in his concern about what he might not do disrespectfully towards Saul said, "God forbid that I should lift *my* hand against God's anointed" [1 Samuel 24:6]. So to think of it in that way, then David was God's anointed himself. He is very plainly seen throughout the Bible, though, as a type of Christ; and we are told that the Messiah was to be of the seed of David. He says,

Psalm 16

AKJV

- ⁷ I will bless the LORD, who has given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons.
- ⁸ I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.
- ⁹ Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices: my flesh also shall rest in hope.
- ¹⁰ For you will not leave my soul in hell; neither will you suffer your Holy One to see corruption.

Now, the listeners here—the people who heard him speak—until this very day would have assumed when they read this psalm that David was talking *about himself*—that "You will not leave *my soul* in the grave. You will not suffer your *Holy One*...", and the king was in a sense holy, or set apart, "...to see corruption."

Psalm 16

AKJV

- ¹⁰ For you will not leave my soul in hell; neither will you suffer your Holy One to see corruption.
- ¹¹ You will show me the path of life: in your presence is fullness of joy; at your right hand there are pleasures for ever more.

Now, he then talks to them in verse 29. He comes back out of the scripture (and we're back in Acts 2 now, verse 29):

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KJ2000

- ²⁹ Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is with us unto this day.

“I know that you will assume that the scripture, the psalm that I just quoted to you, has to do with David. But now think about it, fellas. Right over here you can walk out this door, you can walk down that way and take a few yards over to the right, and you can walk up to David’s tomb. And we *all know* that David is dead, and we *all know* that David’s body is in that tomb, and we *all know* that it’s rotten to the core—that it’s rotted away, and there’s nothing but bones there, and that David *did* see corruption. We all know that, don’t we?” Listen to what he says:

Acts 2

AKJV

²⁹ [...] David, [...] is both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is with us to this day. [*It’s just yards from where we stand.*]

³⁰ Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;

Now, I won’t take the time to go into this today, because it’s been done again and again and again. The Scriptures, the Psalms... God revealed categorically to David that he would raise up... and here they use the term “Christ”. Remember I said earlier that David was, in a sense, a “messiah”. Every king of Israel was, in a sense, a messiah. And yet anyone who reads the Old Testament knows that there were many men who were anointed of God, either as prophets or as kings, but that there is only one “Messiah”—*the* Messiah, as opposed to *a* messiah. And the men in Peter’s audience knew *clearly* what Peter was talking about. And he said that “We all know that David was a prophet...”

Acts 2

AKJV

³⁰ [...] and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;

The Messiah; not just any messiah. The Old Testament is full of it.

Acts 2

AKJV

³¹ He seeing this before spoke of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.

A simple, logical argument; and the men sitting there and listening to them *had to* listen, and they *had to* know, and it all rang true to them. They didn’t have to open up their Psalms. They *knew* this psalm. Peter was able to quote it off the top of his head and they recognized what he said—that he was talking about *the* Messiah. And folks, if the Messiah is going to be resurrected, then the Messiah had to have... *died*. Something they didn’t all know to start with. Although, we now understand that there were large numbers of Jews at this time who *did* believe that Messiah *would* die and suffer. So, this is what this scripture is all about.

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AKJV

³² This Jesus has God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.

Now, here we stand. Not sure how many people there were at the moment. Here is a group of people around you that you think are drunk, because they’re speaking in other languages. They’re *excited*. They are *thrilled* by what they know. They are telling you the wonderful works of God. Look at them. You know that these are not educated men. They’re fishermen. They’re Galileans. And they’re standing here speaking to you in every known language under heaven the wonderful works of God. A miracle is

going on here. And *these men*, all of us here together, are testifying to you that *Jesus was raised from the dead*. And *I'm* telling you that David knew that the Messiah *would* be raised from the dead. This *Jesus is* the Messiah. This *whole* sermon is about that. And he goes on then to say,

Acts 2

KJ2000

³³ Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured forth this, which you now see and hear.

³⁴ For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he said himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit on my right hand,

³⁵ Until I make your foes your footstool.

Jesus cited the same name description saying, “You think David’s such a great man. But David spoke of one whom *he* called ‘his Lord’. His own son he was going to call ‘his Lord’” [Matthew 22:43–45]. And he says,

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AKJV

³⁴ [...] Sit you on my right hand,

³⁵ Until I make your foes your footstool.

³⁶ Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God has made the same Jesus, whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ. [*Know this!*]

³⁷ Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, [...]

I don't know how many there were in the whole crowd who were around them. But the implication is that nearly every man who stood there and listened to what they had to say was *convicted* by what they said. Because he told them who the Messiah was, he told them that he was dead. Of course, everybody knew that Jesus was dead. It was one of the most celebrated events that had taken place. And *a lot* of people knew he was alive. He had been seen by *500 people at once*. And all that word had no doubt gone all over the landscape by this time. And now here are men, in an absolute miracle taking place, speaking in languages, and all of them bearing witness to the fact that Jesus, whom you all saw die just over the hill, *we* saw him *raised from the dead*.

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³⁷ Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

“What shall we do? Where do we go now? You know, I understand what you're saying. And I realize that *I am responsible* for the death of the Christ.”

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³⁸ Then Peter said to them, Repent, [...]

Now, “repent” is kind of a funny word. People hang all kinds of definitions on it. Repentance means... first of all, you know, they were pricked in their heart. *Something* had touched them. *Something* had made them realize that they were wrong. This is another way of saying, I think, that they were convicted of sin. Conviction of sin *has to precede* repentance, doesn't it? For if you don't know you have done wrong, there is nothing you can do about turning it around. To repent simply means to stop

and turn around and go the other way—to stop doing what is wrong and start doing what is right. It doesn't mean that you're going to be doing perfectly tomorrow what you were doing very imperfectly today, but it means that the mindset has been changed. It means the determination has been changed—that just as God by his determinate counsel and foreknowledge decided that Jesus was going to die, you have got to decide that you're going to turn your life around. You have got to *decide* that you're going to go put your feet in God's way instead of going your own way. To repent is to be sorry for what you have done. To repent is to realize that *your sins* are the reason why the Son of God died—that he suffered so you would not have to suffer, that he endured the pain so you would not have to endure the pain, and he died so that you would not have to die. “Understanding these things...”

Acts 2

AKJV

³⁸ [...] Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, [...]

And folks, “remission” simply means “to send away”. And they don't get sent away, sins don't—sins, their results, the corruption that goes with them—don't get sent away short of repentance and of baptism. And if you haven't done that yet, folks, *you have it to do*. I don't know who that might be. If you haven't done it, you have it to do. Because you, me, *every one of us here* are culpable in the death of Christ. *All of us* have sinned. *All of us* have come short of the glory of God. And *all of us* have come under the penalty of death that goes along with sin. *All of us* are going to endure, in the years that come, lives that *just don't work* because of sin. And the only remedy for sin is the blood of Jesus Christ. And the only way to have that is through repentance and baptism.

Acts 2

KJ2000

³⁸ [...] Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ [so that your sins can be sent away], and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Ah, the gift of the Holy Spirit. I think all of us understand that there is a fundamental difference between us and the animals. One man wrote a book about dogs, and he said dogs are like children who are never able to grow up. And I think that's very apt. But they are *like* children; they are *not* children, because they lack something that Man has, that Man-children have, that Man-cubs have, that allows them to think, to reason, to know, and to come eventually to know God. There is *something* in the mind of a Man that does not exist in the mind of animals, and it has nothing whatsoever to do with neurons, and synapses, and the size of the brain, and the weight of the brain, and the way the brain is laid out. It is because there is *a spirit* in Man that elevates Man and his mind to a *totally different level*. There is also a spirit of God that enters the mind of Man, which, with the spirit in Man, enables Man to grow to a much higher level still—to understand the things of God, to know what God is doing, to grasp the things he's doing in his own life, the consequences and where they are going; and it gives a man or a woman the *power* to make changes that no animal ever imagined *needed* to be made. It is a step in power *far greater* than that from animals to Man, and it's not one that takes place immediately, but it *starts* with baptism and the laying on of hands. He goes on to say,

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³⁹ For the promise is to you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our God shall call.

⁴⁰ And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.

⁴¹ Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added to them about three thousand souls.

No time for lengthy baptism counseling. I mean it was just, you know, “Have you repented of your sins, of the transgression of God’s law?” “I sure have.” “Do you accept Jesus Christ as your personal savior?” “I do.” And the sound of a man going under the water and coming back out again with the water cascading down off of him—realizing that, in the process of going through baptism, he has died, figuratively speaking; that just like the wages of sin is death, when he went under the waters of baptism, the penalty *was paid*. And he comes up out of the waters of baptism *free*, for the death certificate—that is, the death warrant; that is, the warrant that justified the death penalty being carried out—is no longer valid, because the man whose name is on it is dead in God’s records. And the person who has come up out of the waters of baptism is a *new* person, with a *new* name, known to God, in whom is the Spirit of God, to whom God will not impute iniquity, whom God will treat as a son, whom God will chastise when it’s necessary, whom God will come and live with, will make his abode with, will work with, will teach, will train. *This* is the difference that takes place when the Holy Spirit comes to a person’s life. It says,

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⁴² And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

⁴³ And fear came on every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

⁴⁴ And all that believed were together, and had all things common;

You know, it’s not so much that the church went and decided all church members are supposed to go and live a communal life. Not that, really. I think what it says is that when you have gone through the experience that the disciples had just gone through, *things* don’t matter very much to you anymore. *Being together* was important. The *fellowship* was important. *Sharing* these things was important. *Holding on* to this moment in time was important. They didn’t *want* to go home. Why would they want to leave this place where 3,000 people were baptized in one day, and more were baptized the next day, and more were baptized the day after that, and where the Spirit of God was at work? Who wants to go home? “Home? What’s that? Bricks? Mortar? Dirt? I don’t want to go home. I want to be *here*.”

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⁴⁵ And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.

They just shared everything around, because *things* were just not important anymore. Would to God that we could have that kind of a spiritual awakening in ourselves—that we begin to get our perspective *so changed* that we’d get our mind off of the world, and the things that are in the world, and the pride of life, and the possessions that all of us get so wrapped up in, realizing they’re not going to be here very long. *These* people, of course, I think believed that they sure enough weren’t going to be, like every Christian who’s ever been along says, “Oh, this isn’t going to be here very long.” The most important thing that isn’t going to be here very long is you and me, though. We’re just not going to be here very long. We only have a very short time to walk our walk with God, and to share our love with other Christians. And we need to do it while we can.

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⁴⁶ And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,

⁴⁷ Praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

You know, as we come down to the end, if I understand Peter correctly, somewhere along the line there is going to be a time like this very much again—when the Spirit of God begins to move in a *powerful* way, and when people are being baptized in great numbers, and when home and things and places will not be that important, and where people will be added to God’s church in droves once again. Some time before he returns, and for some time after he returns...I don’t know. I just would terribly hate to miss out on it, wouldn’t you?

Transcript of a
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