

The Acts of the Apostles

I The Witness of the Christian Church to Jerusalem 1:1-7:60

A. The dynamic birth of the Christian church, 1:1-2:47.

Natural birth presupposes the coming forth of a small human body according to the hopeful thrusting energy of the mother. Certainly Israel was born as a nation according to a divine thrusting forth from the womb of Egypt that was grounded upon an earthly redemption. So the Christian church was similarly born as the body of Christ according to a divine thrusting forth from the womb of Israel, more specifically Jerusalem, that was grounded upon a heavenly redemption accomplished by the Lamb of God (John 1:29).

The apostles had been told that “you are to stay in the city [of Jerusalem] until you are clothed with power from on high” (Luke 24:49; cf. Acts 12:4). Over a year prior to Pentecost, Jesus had publicly declared that “the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified” (John 7:39). Hence, the atonement of Jesus Christ, by which believing sinners were assured of justification through faith before God, was intended to be closely connected with the fulfilled promise of the Holy Spirit’s outpouring at Pentecost some fifty days later that resulted in New Testament regeneration of believers. In other words, the cross-work of Jesus established the believer as being right with God (Rom. 5:1), while the resultant Spirit-work established the same believer as being alive unto God (Rom. 6:11). Both these judicial (Acts 13:38-39) and dynamic (Acts 1:4-5; 2:1-4; 10:44-45) aspects are distinctive yet inseparable elements in biblical salvation. A saved sinner must be both right with God and alive unto God.

1. The prelude of the church concerning Christ’s two comings, 1:1-11.

Here is the conclusion of the gestation period that commenced at the calling of the twelve apostles. For over three years, in the womb of Israel, the preliminary formation of the Christian Church has developed until, with divine birth-pangs, there was born, through the Holy Spirit, the church as the body of Jesus Christ (Matt. 16:18). Thus the Holy Spirit was the divine mid-wife in this birthing process.

a. The departing promise of the Holy Spirit, vs. 1-8.

With specificity, the risen Jesus had not only taught the chosen eleven apostles for forty days, but also commanded them to tarry in Jerusalem, with a sense of anticipation, until they were baptized by the promised Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49; John 14:16, 26; 15:26). Implicit here is the necessity of this effusion for the purpose of Christians being witnesses, but especially the initial apostolic heralds.

(1) The Holy Spirit’s ministry through Christ, vs. 1-5.

In the historic sequence at the commencement of this inter-advent period, it is the completed atonement of Christ that is the righteous, redemptive ground of the promised Holy Spirit’s outpouring (John 7:39). He who was

baptized by the Holy Spirit following His water baptism (Matt. 3:16-17) is He to whom, unlike any preceding prophet, “He [God the Father] gives the Spirit [to His Son Jesus] without measure” (John 3:34). Consequently, by this endowment of the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, having ascended on high, “led captive a host of captives, and He gave [Spiritual] gifts to men” (Eph. 4:8).

- (a) The pre-resurrection ministry according to Luke, vs. 1-2.

The contrasting two-volume account of the ministry of Jesus Christ by Dr. Luke, the “beloved physician” (Col. 4:14), namely the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles, portrays a divinely ordained hiatus. Here the Holy Spirit might be portrayed as a vital hinge upon which the Old Testament and New Testament eras connect, namely as shadow and substance, promise and fulfillment.

- 1) Jesus’ words and works before the apostles, v. 1.

“The first/former [πρῶτος, prōtos adj asm] word/account/book [λόγος, logos n asm] I made/composed [ποιέω, poieō v mis], Theophilus [Θεόφιλε, Theophile n vsm], concerning all that Jesus began [ἄρχω, archō v amis] to do and also to teach [διδάσκω, didaskō inf pa].” However it is really the introduction of the Gospel of Luke, (1:1-4), being Volume I, that sets the scene for Volume II, and indeed even the high likelihood of a Volume III that never actually appeared.¹ Theophilus may have been a patron of Luke. The earthly ministry of the Son of God is comprised of works or “doings” and words or “teachings” (Luke 24:19), emanating from His divine person, yet it is but the beginning of that which reached earthly completion, then continuance by means of heavenly oversight. But furthermore, it is consequently more appropriate that both volumes receive a composite title, namely *The Gospel According to the Acts of Jesus* (Acts 1:1), represented as “the word/gospel [ὁ λόγος, ho logos]” (Luke 1:2). Note that in Volume 1, *Luke* describes the “beginning” of Jesus’ ministry. *Acts* presupposes that the reader is acquainted with the earthly life of Christ. So the Great Commission of Matthew 28:20 is concerned with “teaching” baptized believers, “all that I commanded you,” and especially that recorded in the four gospel accounts.

¹ B. B. Warfield makes a strong case for a prospective Volume III. “The book [of Acts] closes abruptly with a brief notice that he [Paul] preached two whole years in Rome without molestation. These two years, it must be remembered, were already over when this account was written. . . . It seems exceedingly probable, therefore, that a Third Book was to follow, opening—somewhat after the fashion in which Acts opens with reference to Luke—with a detailed account of Paul’s work in Rome, of his trial and release; and thence carrying the story of the foundation of Christianity in the world on up to the consummation originally intended and hinted at in the preface set at the head of the Gospel of Luke.” *Selected Shorter Writings*, II, pp. 24-25.

2) Jesus' choosing and ordering of the apostles, v. 2.

“Until the day He was taken up [ἀναλαμβάνω, analambanō v apis][to heaven], having commanded [ἐντέλλομαι, entellomai par amnsm] the apostles by the Holy Spirit whom He chose [ἐκλέγομαι, eklegomai v amis].”

- a) Jesus' building of His church was to be through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, not human design and expertise.
- b) Jesus' choosing of apostles was Spirit authorized (John 15:16; 20:21-22). Their appointment as foundation stones was for the building of Jesus' new edifice, the church (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 2:20).
- c) Jesus' orders for the apostles, given over a period of forty days, were probably numerous, v. 3. Yet the Holy Spirit directed Him re three vital matters:
 - i) Concerning tarrying in Jerusalem, v. 4, that is until divinely empowered and directed.
 - ii) Concerning the kingdom of God, v. 3, as gospel about Jesus (8:12; 19:8; 28:23, 31).
 - iii) Concerning the apostolic complement of twelve that needed completion, vs. 15-26.

But all of this activity falls under the distinctive leading and subsequent sovereign outpouring or effusion of the promised Holy Spirit. All must be subject to God's presence and power in the new ministry that follows. Hence God's prospective new edifice, the Christian Church, was to be rooted in divine inauguration, not human consultation and organization. As such it was designed to be “growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit” (Eph. 2:21-22). This is why the church of Jesus Christ is to be known as “the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth” (I Tim. 3:15).

- (b) The post-resurrection ministry of Jesus Christ according to Luke, vs. 3-5.

Between the Passover, immediately after which Jesus was crucified and then raised from the dead, to Pentecost, was a period of fifty days. Hence, here we learn that Jesus, immediately, after His resurrection, ministered to His disciples for forty days until his ascension. Consequently, from His return to the Father until Pentecost and the

outpouring of the Holy Spirit was a tarrying period of approximately ten days.

1) Jesus' forty days of speaking, v. 3.

“To these [apostles] also He presented [παρίστημι, paristēmi v aais] Himself alive [ζῶω, zaō par paasm] after His suffering [πασχω, paschō inf aa, unto death], by many reasonable, convincing proofs/signs/evidences [τεκμήριον, tekmerion n dpn], appearing [ὀπτάνω, optanō par pmnsm] to them over [a period of] forty days and speaking [λέγω, legō par pansm] the things concerning the kingdom of God.” Jesus was not merely discovered alive, but He revealed/presented Himself according to His good pleasure and specific design by means of a variety of personal exposures.

a) The apologetic ministry of Jesus to the apostles.

What were the “many convincing proofs” that Jesus used to affirm His resurrection from the dead? Consider Luke 24:25-27, 35, which testimony on the Emmaus road was reported to the apostles; in vs. 36-43, also at that time, upon making a sudden personal appearance Jesus drew attention to His body, saying “touch me,” and His ability to eat material food. In John 20:24-28 Jesus very tangibly witnessed to Thomas. Then in John 21:12-13 Jesus prepared a substantial breakfast for the apostles. Further Jesus appeared to Peter personally, then the twelve, then over 500 brethren, and finally Paul (I Cor. 15:4-8). Keep in mind that the apostle replacing Judas must necessarily have been “a witness with us of His resurrection,” vs. 21-22; cf. 2:32. This was almost certainly a command of Christ.

So this resurrection truth was to be the foundation of all subsequent apostolic teaching (2:22-24, 32; 3:15, 26; 4:1-2, 10, 33; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30, 33-34, 37; 17:18, 32; 23:6; 24:21; 26:22-23). Of course it was the capstone proof that Jesus was the authentic “Lamb of God” whereby sin could be really forgiven (2:38; 3:18-19; 5:31; 10:43; 13:37-38; 22:14-16; 26:17-18).

b) The teaching ministry of Jesus to the apostles.

What then were the things Jesus spoke concerning “the kingdom of God”? In the Bible overall, this is a very broad concept spanning centuries. However in Acts 1:6 it more specifically focuses on the Messianic kingdom of Jesus (8:12; 14:22; 19:8 (Matt. 12:28); 20:25; 28:23, 31), which is “the kingdom of God’s dear son” (Eph. 5:5; Col. 1:12-13; II Tim. 4:18; II Pet. 1:11; Rev. 12:10). It is “the new society which

was to be founded in Christ's name."² It is the commencing, ongoing and future consummate reign of Christ, according to the prophets (3:19-21).

Following over three years of personal instruction, Jesus declared in His Upper Room Discourse to the eleven disciples: "I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now" (John 16:12). Hence this 40 day seminar was the graduate class that especially clarified, for these wooden-headed students, the supreme significance of His atonement, that they could now better understand or "bear." Surely He also reiterated former marching orders (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:48; John 21:17-17, 22). In addition Jesus taught concerning His imminent ascension leading to His session beside His Father and consequent ongoing intercessory ministry. Concerning this coronation by His Father (Mark 16:19; Col. 3:1), doubtless Jesus also stressed with great emphasis the vital importance and necessity of the imminent outpouring of the Holy Spirit, especially for the impartation of gifts and graces (Eph. 4:8). This may well have been His first item of intercession (John 14:26). Then full illumination and integration and arousal concerning the truth would come, even as Jesus also promised in the Upper Room Discourse: "But when He, the Spirit of [the] truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak of His own initiative, but whatever He hears [from the Father and His Son], He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come" (John 16:13).

Indeed this was *the* vital element at this dawning of the church. And today it is the most abused and neglected element of modern churches. Paul told the Thessalonians that, "our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction" (I Thess. 1:5). We are not suggesting a concession here to modern Charismatic emphases, including many carnal excesses that are often so far removed from the Pentecost of history.

What we have here is a call to authentic apostolic Christianity that the chosen twelve apostles launched. The unique wonder of this inauguration is not repeated even later in Acts, let alone through the centuries of Church history. However it does gloriously establish the New Covenant era which is to be perpetuated, no less through the power of God and His Word.

² J. Rawson Lumby, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 82.

1) Jesus' command to wait for the Father's promise, v. 4.

“And gathering them together/bringing them together [συναλίζομαι, sunalizomai par pmnsm, as at a meal], He commanded [παραγγέλλω, parangellō v aais] them not to leave/depart from [χωρίζω, chōrizō inf pp] Jerusalem, but to wait/remain [περιμένω, perimenō inf pa] for the promise [ἐπαγγελία, epangelia n asf] of the Father which [He/Christ said], ‘you heard [ἀκούω, akouō v aais] from Me.’” One vital principle in understanding Acts is the distinction the author makes between an indicative statement that indicates events and truth, and an imperative statement that commands a response, a course of behavior or duty. This is the distinction between an “is” and an “ought.” In Greek the indicative and imperative moods are identical in form (cf. ζηλώω, zēloō, I Cor. 12:31).

Consider Acts 5:1-11, that is as to whether Christians today should accept the judgment of Ananias and Sapphira, through Peter, as an indicative or an imperative for them. And even when an imperative might be clearly stated, then we must determine whether it is intended by the Spirit of God as a local or a universal principle by way of application. Hence the question here is whether the imperative of Jesus concerning tarrying is local or universal. The clear indication of the whole of the New Testament is that the former is the case. There is no indication of subsequent tarrying for the Holy Spirit in the church, and certainly no command, in spite of attempted tarrying meetings as introduced at the commencement of the modern Pentecostal movement. Strictly speaking, the tarrying command here was only addressed to the apostles.

It seems implicit that Jesus considered that the apostles might prematurely move out into Jerusalem and beyond according to carnal instinct; this He restrains until they spread out under divine constraint and animation. This was really repetition of an earlier command (Luke 24:49; cf. John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:12-15).

2) Jesus' promise of Holy Spirit baptism, v. 5.

“Because, on the one hand, John baptized/immersed/drenched/overwhelmed [βαπτίζω, baptizō v aais] with water, but on the other hand, you [apostles] will be baptized [v fpip] with the Holy Spirit not after many days hence/from now.” The promise here is specifically directed toward the apostles and not the larger crowd of over 120 persons (1:15) that would also gather in the upper room of the house they were accustomed to meet in (1:13; 2:2). John 1, 3 provides a stark contrast between John the Baptist and Jesus, water baptism and Spirit baptism (John 1:29-34; 3:5). So here the same contrast is made, except that now actual

fulfillment is close at hand with Jesus being the agent of transcendent Spirit baptism (John 1:33).

Surely the apostles were already indwelt by the Holy Spirit (John 20:22), yet as apostolic foundation stones (I Cor. 12:28; Eph. 2:19-20; 3:5) there was the need of distinctive empowerment. There are other instances of such a special, extraordinary anointing, especially upon prophets, priests and kings, in the Old Testament concerning Moses (Exod. 3:1-4:9; 33:11; 34:29-30), Joshua (Deut. 34:9), Saul and his prophets (I Sam. 10:1-11), David (I Sam. 16:13-14), Elijah and Elisha (II Kings 2:14-15), Ezekiel (Ezek. 2:1-2). In the New Testament further sovereign outpourings of the Holy Spirit fell upon Samaria (Acts 8:12-13), Caesarea (Acts 10:44-46), and Ephesus (Acts 19:1-7). However problems then and today only arise in this realm when men, such as Simon the sorcerer, covet this distinctive blessing when it is not appointed for them (Acts 8:9-24). Yet this visitation at Pentecost was to transcend all other outpourings, especially in terms of its universal implications (2:17). Then for the apostles there follows a break from Jesus' presence.

(2) The Holy Spirit's power through the Father, vs. 6-8.

The apostles appear to have been distracted from the vital thrust of vs. 4-5, especially on account of their Jewish eschatological presuppositions that were essentially correct yet chronologically astray. Now being convinced of Jesus' resurrection and thus His potential glory as the Messiah, they had been privately speculating about the prospects of national Israel and future earthly rejuvenation, in quasi millennial terms. So they eagerly sought Jesus' adjudication on the matter. This was a wise place to go!

(a) The disciples' concern for the future glory of Israel, v. 6.

“Therefore those having come together [συνέρχομαι, *sunerchomai* par aanpm] were asking Him, saying, ‘Lord, is it at this time [χρόνος, *chronos* n dsm] you are reestablishing/restoring [ἀποκαθίστημι, *apokathistēmi* v pais] the kingdom to Israel?’” The question here was posed with breathless anticipation. Surely the “restoration of Israel” was a universal belief amongst the Jews, if not its holy and spiritual as well as material character (Matt. 8:11; 19:27-28; Mark 10:35-37). Yet this hope continued to be anticipated after Pentecost (Acts 3:19-21; 5:30-31).³ Thus for the apostles, it was beyond dispute that Jesus would Himself restore Israel to glorious prominence, as most likely He had earlier mentioned. The burning question was *when* this cataclysmic revolution would take place, and that at the expense of any vision concerning the conversion of the Gentiles!

³ George N. H. Peters details this widespread Jewish expectation concerning national restoration that subsequent church historians have acknowledged. *The Theocratic Kingdom*, I, pp. 183-184; III, pp. 572-573.

- (b) The disciples' denial of knowing times and seasons, v. 7.

“He said to them, ‘It is not for you to know [γινώσκω, ginōskō inf aa] times/events [χρόνος, chronos n apm] or seasons/epochs [καιρός, kairos n apm] which the Father has set [τίθημι, tithēmi v amis] by His own authority.’” So Jesus adds an extra time reference here concerning “epochs,” as well as “events.” But He does not challenge the *fact* of His restoration of Israel since, in remaining the quintessential Jew, He has already alluded to it (Matt. 8:11; 19:27-28; Luke 13:35). Rather He indicates there will be considerable delay, obviously for the sake of the universal outreach of the gospel. The plan for subsequent centuries concerning Israel and the nations is the Fathers' alone to unfold. To this the Son yields unqualified submission, though He clearly has in view the more immediate “times of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24; cf. Rom. 11:25), and the necessity of apostolic spiritual equipment and strategy in this regard.

- (c) The disciples' promised Holy Spirit commissioning, v. 8.

“But you will receive [λαμβάνω, lambanō v fmip] power [δύναμις, dunamis n asf], the Holy Spirit having come [ἐπέρχομαι, eperchomai par aagsn] on you, and you will be [εἰμί, eimi v fmip] My witnesses [μάρτυς, martus n npm] both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and unto the end/extremity [ἔσχατος, eschatos adj gsn] of the earth.” A strong adversative directs us to a more important, immediate matter than that of v. 7. During the period of waiting already commanded, there was not so much specific anticipation of visible signs, accompanied with fiery emblems, a thunderous sound, and miraculous speaking in foreign languages according to the great outpouring that was about to fall. There was much prayer that submitted to the promises of Jesus (John 14:16-18; 15:26-27; 16:13-14) so that the apostles looked forward to an unprecedented encounter with the Holy Spirit. This, they were told, was to result in necessary power, or being “clothed with power from on high” (Luke 24:49).

The essential dynamic of the early church was its corporate and individual embodiment of divine power, not church growth strategy; none of the apostles were academics or cultural sophisticates. As a result there was astonishment by the watching world of sterile Judaism (Acts 2:5-7; 3:10-12; 4:13; 9:20-22; 10:44-46).

However, notwithstanding being endowed with remarkable spiritual gifts and graces, the apostles were first appointed to be “My [Jesus] witnesses,” that is authorized heralds, ambassadors for Christ (II Cor. 5:20). They were not primarily to “build bridges of friendship,” or help people think better about themselves. The great matter they were to testify about was the person and work of Jesus Christ, the truth about Him by means of persuasive preaching, heralding, gospelizing, and teaching.

The territorial outreach strategy was first to the Jews in Jerusalem and then *as well* to all of Judean Judaism, the half-breed Samaritans and pure Gentiles in the regions beyond to the very ends of the earth (Matt. 24:14; Acts 8:1; II Cor. 10:16). And the record of Acts is that this sequence was followed exactly according to divine ordering, and not mere human planning (Acts 2:43-47; 4:13; 5:12, 28; 8:1, 4-5; 10:1-48). The thought here then is of church planting, thus permanent witnessing, and not mere fleeting itinerant ministry. Here then is a summary of the *Book of Acts* in a nutshell! Here also is the fulfillment of that which Jesus had earlier prophesied: “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come” (Matt. 24:14). Here then is described the essence of authentic Christian outreach, which is being Holy Spirit empowered witnesses to the Lord Jesus Christ.

b. The departing promise of Jesus’ return, vs. 9-11.

Here is the main description of the ascension of Jesus Christ to His Father, forty days after His resurrection, and ten days before Pentecost. Although He met with the apostles upon a mountain in the region of Galilee (Matt. 28:16; Mark 16:7), close to where they ordinarily lived, yet His ascension was from the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:12), eastward across the Kedron Valley outside of Jerusalem (Mark 16:19; Luke 24:50-51; John 20:17). Prior to His death, Jesus’ ascension to His Father was anticipated with great delight and a sense of fulfillment (Luke 9:51; John 6:62; 7:33; 14:12, 28; 16:5, 10, 17, 28). So with Paul, the ascension of the Lord Jesus was of great significance (Rom. 8:34; Eph. 1:20-23; 2:6; 4:8-11; Phil. 2:6-11; 3:20; I Thess. 1:10; 4:16; I Tim. 3:16). In Hebrews there is the greatest emphasis (1:3-13; 2:9; 4:14; 6:19-20; 7:24-25; 8:1; 9:12, 24; 10:12-13; 12:2); also consider I Peter 3:22; I John 2:1.

(1) The disciples behold Jesus taken up through the cloud, v. 9.

“And having said these things, while they were seeing/watching [βλέπω, bleppō par pagpm], He was lifted up [ἐπαίρω, epeirō v apis] and a cloud received/hid [ὑπολαμβάνω, hupolambanō v aais] Him from their eyes/sight [ὀφθαλμός, ophthalmos n gpm].” It was the incarnate, glorified person of Jesus Christ, enshrined in spiritual, glorified flesh, that passed through a cloud, probably specially prepared, that hid His glorious receding appearance, while at the same time He was “received/welcome up into heaven” (Mark 16:19). Here the eleven alone (Mark 16:14, 19; Luke 24:36-51) mingled astonishment with sadness, awe, and recollection of Jesus’ recent teaching concerning this very moment of returning to His Father’s bosom. Here is mystery, though no more than the incarnation and resurrection. Here also is completion or the perfection of Jesus’ redemptive work that includes, death, burial, resurrection, ascension and session (Heb. 10:12-14). Here is the prospect of coronation and the climactic “Well done!” (cf. Matt. 3:17) of the Father. What then was Jesus’ parting “blessing” (εὐλογέω, eulogeō, v aais) with “uplifted hands” (Luke 24:50-51)? Perhaps it was repetition of the earlier reassuring thought, “and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:20). Certainly the result was worship and joyous praise

(Luke 24:52-53). Such triumph here always produces this result in the hearts of true believers.

(2) The disciples behold angelic testimony, vs. 10-11.

Here is further angelic involvement that gives climactic focus to the overall visitation of the Son of God to earth. Angels were not only involved at the annunciation of Jesus' prospective birth (Matt. 1:20; 2:13; Luke 1:11-20; 2:8-14), His temptations in the wilderness (Matt. 4:11), His agony in Gethsemane (Luke 22:43), His risen welcome at the empty tomb (Matt. 28:2-7; Mark 16:5-7; Luke 24:4; John 20:12-13), but also here upon His departure to the Father. Surely these appearances were concerning, "things into which angels long to look" (I Pet. 1:12) from heaven, who come to earth under orders as well as for closer examination.

(a) They are radiant angelic messengers, v. 10.

"And as they were gazing/staring [ἀτενίζω, atenizō par panpm, up] into the heaven/sky [οὐρανός, ouranos n asm] while He was going [πορεύομαι, poreuomai par pmgsm], behold, two men stood beside/near [παρίστημι, paristēmi v plaip] them in white clothing [ἑσθής, esthēs n dpf]." The disciples were looking with strained intent, a fixed gaze (14:9) at the ascending Jesus, occurring at a point in time. The messengers had a holy, radiant appearance (cf. Matt. 28:2-3; Mark 16:5; Luke 24:4; John 20:12) that surely is a reflection of their heavenly origin. They are agents from heaven, conveying supplemental instruction, who are intent on breaking the spellbound trance of the apostles so that they might become engaged in their earthly calling.

(b) They are second coming angelic messengers, v. 11.

"And they said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand [ἵστημι, histēmi v paip] looking [ἐμβλέπω, emblepō par panpm] into the heaven/sky? This same Jesus who has been taken up [ἀναλαμβάνω, analambanō par apnsm] from you into the heaven/sky will come [ἔρχομαι, erchomai v fmis] in the same way/manner [τρόπος, tropos n asm] you saw [θεάομαι, theaomai v amip] Him go into the heaven/sky.'" The upward look is understandable; however a very mild rebuke is offered since such a fixation or constant gaze can distract from the fulfillment of necessary earthly labor that obeys Christ's command according to v. 8. Further, the inference is that His return will not be immanent, but rather subsequent to completion of the work of evangelism that reaches to the four corners of the earth (Matt. 24:14). Therefore the doctrine of Christ's second coming must not so dominate that it distracts from the proclamation of the merits of His first coming, and that notwithstanding Titus 2:13, provided it is understood in the light of v. 14. Did the apostles keep watching with the thought that His return would be very, very soon? This is a fundamental problem with some modern prophetic scenarios whereby matters of the rapture, the great

tribulation, the antichrist, the millennium, so dominate that there is a lack of proclamation of the saving grace of God to sinners.

1) The *identity* of this returning Jesus.

He is “this same Jesus,” this visible person with nail pierced hands who is spiritually, gloriously, bodily material, spatially located, at a point in time. He is not some abstract phantom, a mere roving spirit, a ubiquitous presence (I John 1:1), but divine, tangible substance, standing at a particular place.

2) The *method* of this returning Jesus.

The second time He will come from heaven to earth with full unveiled glory (Matt. 16:27; Acts 3:20-21; I Thess. 4:17; II Thess. 1:7-10; Titus 2:13; Rev. 1:7), and not by means of a humble Bethlehem manger. Thus His return to planet earth will be personal, bodily, visible, temporal, spatial, geographic.

3) The *location* of this returning Jesus.

Since Jesus ascended from the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:12), in the light of the language here it ought not to surprise us that He can be expected to return to the very same location. Hence it is highly significant that Zechariah 14 describes, in an apocalyptic manner, concerning His second coming, and that specifically “His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south” (Zech. 14:4). Further, this coming will be for the salvation of Israel when assailed by the nations. It is the rending of the Mount of Olives that will provide a way of escape, not unlike the former passage through the Red Sea (Zech. 14:4-5; cf. Exod. 14:15-31). Then “the Lord [Jesus Christ] will go forth and fight against those nations, . . . for it will be a unique day” when darkness eventually yields to light (Zech. 14:2-3, 6-7).⁴ So He shall certainly return in “like manner.” In the light of this, Charles Wesley and John Cennick have written:

Lo! He comes with clouds descending,
Once for favored sinners slain;
Thousand thousand saints attending,
Swell the triumph of His train:
Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
God appears on earth to reign.

⁴ David Baron, *Zechariah*, pp. 491-502; Charles L. Feinberg, *God Remembers*, pp. 248-256.

Every eye shall now behold Him
 Robed in dreadful majesty;
 Those who set at naught and sold Him,
 Pierced and nailed Him to the tree,
 Deeply wailing, deeply wailing, deeply wailing,
 Shall the true Messiah see.

Every island, sea, and mountain,
 Heav'n and earth, shall flee away;
 All who hate Him must, confounded,
 Hear the trump proclaim the day:
 Come to judgment! Come to judgment! Come to judgment!
 Come to judgment! Come away!

Now redemption, long expected,
 See in solemn pomp appear;
 All His saints, by man rejected,
 Now shall meet Him in the air:
 Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
 See the day of God appear!

Yea, Amen! let all adore Thee,
 High on Thine eternal throne;
 Savior, take the power and glory,
 Claim the kingdom for Thine own;
 O come quickly! O come quickly! O come quickly!
 Everlasting God, come down!

2. The preparation of the church for God's outpoured blessing, 1:12-26.

Obedience to the ascended Christ's command has required waiting in Jerusalem for ten days, and there is ready compliance. Upon the Son of God's removal, there was immediate "worship" [προσκυνέω, proskuneō par aanpm, Luke 24:52] on the Mount of Olives, that is awesome, prayerful adoration, perhaps on the apostles' knees. But subsequent to this, what is to be their attitude and how are they to occupy themselves during the days ahead? Certainly Peter exercises leadership in this regard.

a. The upper room gathering, vs. 12-14.

Perhaps the angels also directed the apostles not only to retire to Jerusalem and wait, just as Jesus had instructed them, but also spend the days ahead in prayer together, even as Christ had taught them. At this the angels disappeared as if following the way set before them by their Master. Then the apostles probably erupted with pent up feelings and animated discussion.

(1) The transition from Olivet to Jerusalem, v. 12.

"Then they returned [ὑποστρέφω, hupostrephō v aaip] to Jerusalem from the mount being called Olivet [Ἐλαιών, elaiōn n gsm], which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away." The distance was a short journey of near two thousand yards, via the Kedron Valley. Thus they passed close by

Gethsemane, though the whole brief walk was a stimulus to countless memories of fellowship with their Master, and especially his teaching that so often focused on recent climactic events. Now truth was coalescing in their souls as never before.

(2) The upper room gathering of the eleven, v. 13.

“And when they entered [εἰσερχομαι, eiserchomai v aaip, Jerusalem], into the upstairs room [ὑπερῶον, hyperōon n asn] they went up [ἀναβαίνω, anabainō v aaip] where they were staying/residing [καταμένω, katamenō par panpm]; that is, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James [the son] of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas [the son] of James.” The apostles returned to Jerusalem to what was probably a familiar house incorporating “the upper room” where they had most likely partaken of the Passover celebration and the Last Supper, and enjoyed other times of fellowship with the Lord Jesus (Luke 22:12; Acts 1:13; 2:2). This was also a place of hallowed memories, indeed probably known as a Jerusalem hub for followers of the famous Nazarene. It may have been part of the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark (Acts 12:12-13). However this gathering does not mean that the apostles were mainly closeted in this setting since at times they were “with great joy . . . continually in the temple praising God” (Luke 24:52-53). For this reason we reject the declaration of beloved C. H. Spurgeon when, in preaching on v. 14, he declared:

Can you judge of the sorrow which filled the hearts of the disciples when their Lord was gone from them? They were an army without a leader, a flock without a shepherd, a family without a head. Exposed to innumerable trials, the strong, brazen wall of his presence, which had been round about them, was now withdrawn. In the deep desolation of their spirits they resorted to prayer. They were like a flock of sheep that will huddle together in a storm, or come closer each to its fellow when they hear the sound of the wolf. Poor defenseless creatures as they were, they yet loved to come together, and would die together if need were.⁵

No, the apostle’s were in fact joyous, poised at the starting line, so to speak. While being needful of divine arousal, they witnessed in the temple region concerning their ascended Lord. So we much prefer J. C. Ryle’s explanation here.

How shall we account for these joyful feelings [after the ascension of the Lord Jesus, yet before Pentecost]? How shall we explain the singular fact, that this little company of weak disciples, left, for the first time, like orphans, in the midst of an angry world, was not cast down, but was full of joy?—The answer to these questions is short and simple. The disciples rejoiced, because now for the first time they saw all things clearly about their Master. The veil was removed from their eyes. The darkness had at length passed away. The meaning of Christ's humiliation and low estate,—the meaning of His mysterious agony, and cross, and passion, the meaning of His being Messiah and yet a sufferer,—the meaning of His being crucified, and yet being Son of

⁵ C. H. Spurgeon, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, 60:3421, Ages Digital Library.

God,—all, all was at length unraveled and made plain. They saw it all. They understood it all. Their doubts were removed. Their stumbling-blocks were taken away. Now at last they possessed clear knowledge, and possessing clear knowledge felt unmingled joy.⁶

(3) The enlarged gathering for prayer, v. 14.

“These all were remaining steadfast/strong [προσκατερέω, proskartereō par panpm] with one mind/accord [ὁμοθυμαδόν, homothumadon adv] in [the] prayer [προσευχῇ, proseuchē n dsf], together with [the] women and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and His brothers.” Here then we see the apostles at their place of retirement, perhaps toward the end of the day with the culmination of blessed fellowship in three areas.

(a) There is unity in the truth.

The fact that this body of apostles, in particular, was “with one mind,” is remarkable when one considers earlier occasions of jealousy, rivalry, weakness of faith, and evident dullness. Now the Spirit of God is already working in these lives (Luke 24:52-53). To be in the upper room “of one mind/accord,” homothumadon, is to employ a term that often describes in Acts the unity of the early church (2:46; 4:24; 5:12; 15:25; cf. Rom. 15:5-6). However, this unity was primarily concerned with the truth about Jesus, his being the true Messiah, and proven to be so with the substantial evidence of resurrection, along with ascension and hundreds of earlier signs and wonders.

(b) There is unity in prayer.

It should be rightly concluded that unity in the truth laid a foundation for unity in prayer, indeed corporate agreement in “the prayer,” cf. “the prayers,” 2:42, that perhaps included even “the Lord’s Prayer” (Matt. 6:9-13)! This prayer probably included concern for unbelief encountered in the temple precincts during the day; they also prayed for those persecuting them; further they prayerfully sought fulfillment of that which their Lord had instructed them about. In all of this there were many joyful “amens” of agreement in the midst of non-segregated fellowship.

(c) There is unity in relationships.

Including Mary, under the care of John (John 19:27), and her four sons, James, Joseph, Simon and Judas (Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3), previously mentioned in unbelief (John 7:5), with the eleven apostles this totaled sixteen. Further, the “the women” may have numbered ten or more (cf. Luke 8:1-3), so that at least thirty probably gathered *at this time*, before the actual day of Pentecost had arrived. Though the ferment among the

⁶ J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on Luke*, II, p. 527-528.

disciples of Jesus caused the number to grow daily to one hundred and twenty (1:15). It is significant that here is the last mention of Mary in the New Testament which finds her at prayer, though in no way taking a prominent role.

Peter was certainly the leader of this gathering, and he remains singularly dominant until the mention of John in 3:1. But now a burden is upon his heart that probably Jesus had stimulated. There is no expressed grief at the death of Judas, only concern that the complement of the eleven should be updated to twelve. It was treated as a major concern, as vs. 15-26 indicate, especially as the Pentecostal outpouring was to signify the twelve pillars of the Christian church. So the New Jerusalem, descending from heaven, is to have *twelve gates* guarded by *twelve angels*. Each gate was named after the *twelve tribes of Israel*. Its high wall had *twelve foundation stones* named after the *twelve apostles* (Rev. 21:12, 14). The spiritual building here about to be erected upon “the foundation of the apostles,” is not some haphazardly assembled edifice, but “a holy temple in the Lord, . . . a dwelling of God in the Spirit” (Eph. 2:20-22).

b. The apostolic replacement, vs. 15-26.

In what follows concerning Judas, it is surprising that there is no verbal tirade of condemnation because of the terrible treachery he committed. Doubtless shocked at their own deception, the apostles seem to speak of this son of Simon, from Iscariot or Kerioth, with measured and restrained tones. The reason may be that Judas’ responsible actions were nevertheless seen to be divinely directed, v. 16. Only Luke, with somewhat medical precision, appears less restrained when describing the pathetic, tragic end of this one of whom Christ said: “One of you [disciples] is a devil, . . . the son of perdition” John 6:70; 17:12), and that, “it would have been good for that man if he had not been born” (Matt. 26:24).

(1) The demise of Judas, vs. 15-20.

The suicide of Judas is preceded by a degree of personal sorrow concerning his betrayal and consequent condemnation of his professed Master. So, “he felt remorse [μεταμέλομαι, *metamelomai* par apnsm] and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, ‘I have sinned by betraying innocent blood’” (Matt. 27:3-4). It is significant that Judas’ “remorse/sorrow” here, *metamelomai*, being deep regret, even *disturbance* of the mind and heart for a bad deed done, yet was not “repentance,” *metanoēō* (cf. 2:38; 3:19), which more involves a *change* of mind and heart.⁷

⁷ R. C. Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament*, pp. 255-261. So also A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures of the New Testament*, I, pp. 222-223. Similarly concerning Matthew 21:29, see M. R. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, I, pp. 116-117.

(a) The spiritual initiative of Peter, v. 15.

“And in those days, Peter rose/stood up [ἀνίστημι, anistēmi par aansm] in the midst of/among the brethren/ brotherhood [ἀδελφός, adelphos n gpm] and said (for there was a crowd of about one hundred and twenty names/people [ὄνομα, onoma n gpn]).” The upper room must have been quite large, perhaps being provided by a wealthy supporter. While the “brethren” presently numbered eleven males, they were surrounded by a large crowd of disciples. So there may be intended emphasis here by Luke upon the remarkable contrast that Peter provides with Judas, even though *both* apostles were betrayers of Christ. A. T. Robertson suggests that whereas the sorrow of Peter concerning his denials with cursing (Matt. 26:74-75; John 21:15-17) led to Christ, the source of grace, the sorrow of Judas led to despair, a sense of abandonment by God, and hence suicide.⁸ From another perspective, the address that now follows was Peter’s trial run in terms of his imminent employment of “the keys of the kingdom” (Matt. 16:18-19).

(b) The spiritual infidelity of Judas, vs. 16-20.

There is a fearful lesson here concerning the considerable degree to which a man may be religious as a professing follower of Christ, and yet in the long run prove to be most devilish as an apostate! Our savior warned of this in Matthew 7:21-23. So David experienced similar betrayal, and at the same time prophesied of Christ (Ps. 41:9; cf. John 13:18; Ps. 55:18-21; Matt. 26:23). Now Peter will expand upon this point.

1) His Scriptural betrayal, v. 16.

“Men/brethren, it was necessary for the Scripture to be fulfilled [πληρώω, plērōō inf ap] which the Holy Spirit foretold [προλέγω, prolegō v aais] through the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide [ὁδηγός, hodēgos n gsm] to those who seized/arrested [συλλαμβάνω, sullambanō par aadpm] Jesus.” Peter is principally addressing the male apostles as others observe, though his chief authority here is not seniority but the Holy Spirit inspired Word of God. Without proof, yet it is strongly suspected that Peter here reflects his obedient fulfillment of the teaching of the Lord Jesus concerning Scripture. The Word of God must not only be believed, but also fulfilled through ready obedience. So Judas, though fully responsible, yet was part of God’s plan whereby he would be a link in the chain of betrayal that included those who would “seize/arrest,” Jesus, but ultimately those who would judge Him, especially the Jewish leaders (John 19:10-11).

⁸ Ibid, Robertson.

2) His Scriptural apostleship, v. 17.

“Because he was numbered/counted [καταριθμέω, katarithmeō par ppnsm] among/as one of us and received [λαγχάνω, lanchanō v aais] the [his] share [κλήρος, klēros n asm] in this ministry [διακονία, diakonia n gsf].” Actually this enrollment or allotment was the work of Christ (John 6:70), though it was unto service as a “devilish” disciple, but certainly not unto salvation as Jesus later makes clear (John 13:2-5, 13-18). Yet there is surely enigma here that also involves “the mystery of lawlessness/iniquity” (II Thess. 2:7), as was the case with divine permission for the fall of Lucifer and the entrance of sin through the serpent. However Christ is sovereign over all of this.

3) His Scriptural suicide, vs. 18-20.

Here is the end of Judas whereby his remorse has no vision of the mercy of Christ, like the despairing man in the iron cage in *The Pilgrim’s Progress*.⁹ Quite likely he believed that his sin was too great. Though he certainly does seem to have been abandoned by Christ (John 13:27; Rom. 1:24, 26, 28).

a) At the field of wickedness, v. 18.

“Therefore this man acquired [κτάομαι, ktaomai v amis] a field/plot of land [χωρίον, chōrion n asn] with the price [μισθός, misthos n gsm] of [his] unrighteousness [ἀδικία, adikia n gsf] and becoming/falling [γίνομαι, ginomai par amnsm] head first [πρηνής, prēnēs adj nsm] he burst/cracked open [λακάω, lakaō v aais] in the middle [μέσος, mesos adj nsm] and all his intestines [σπλάγχνον, splanchnon n hpn] gushed/poured out [ἐκχέω, ekcheō v apis].” According to Matthew 27:7, the high priests bought, with Judas’ money, a “Potter’s field as a burial place for strangers.” Knowing this, Judas retreated to the field and, with great irony, chose to commit suicide there. The description here of Judas’ death is vivid, as might be expected by a medical doctor. It describes the consequences of Judas hanging himself (Matt. 27:5; cf. II Chron. 25:12), perhaps on account of the rope breaking according to Alfred Edersheim’s vivid description.

[With Judas] it was despair, and his a desperate resolve. He must get rid of these thirty pieces of silver, which, like thirty serpents, coiled round his soul with the terrible hissing of death. Then at least his deed would have nothing of the selfish in it: only a terrible error, a mistake, to which he had been incited by these Sanhedrists. Back to them with the money, and let them have it again! . . . [But to them he appeared] a

⁹ John Bunyan, *Works*, III, pp. 100-101.

most unwelcome sight and intrusion on them, this necessary but odious figure in the drama. . . . But he would be heard; nay, his words would cast the burden on them to share it with him, as with hoarse cry he broke into this: “I have sinned, in that I have betrayed innocent blood!” They turned from him with impatience, in contempt, as so often the seducer turns from the seduced, and, God help such, with the same fiendish guilt of hell: “What is that to us? See thou to it!” Out he rushed from the Temple, out of Jerusalem, “into solitude.”

Wither shall it be? Down into the horrible solitude of the Valley of Hinnon, the Tophet” of old, with its ghastly memories, the Gehenna of the future, with its ghostly associations. . . . Here jagged rocks rise perpendicularly: perhaps there was some gnarled, bent, stunted tree. Up there he climbed to the top of that rock. Now slowly and deliberately he unwound his long girdle that held his garment. It was the girdle in which he had carried those thirty pieces of silver. With that girdle he will hang himself. . . . It is done; but as, unconscious, not yet dead, perhaps, he swung heavily on that branch; under the unwonted burden the girdle gave way, or perhaps the knot, which his trembling hands had made, unloosed, and he fell heavily forward among the jagged rocks beneath.¹⁰

b) At the field of blood, v. 19.

“And it came to be known [γνωστός, gnōstos adj nsn] to all those living [κατοικέω, katoikeō par padpm] in Jerusalem, so that, in their own dialect/language [διάλεκτος, dialektos n dsf] that field/plot of land was called [καλέω, kaleō inf ap] Hakeldama [Ἀκελδαμά n asn], that is, field/plot of blood [αἷμα, haima n gsn, cf. Matt. 27:8].” Obviously great hemorrhaging took place so that the notorious location of this tragedy, surely a major topic in Jerusalem, led to the transposition of the title from “Field of Judas” to the “Field of Blood.” Here was sinful blood poured out that could not atone for even Judas himself. Whereas Jesus’ sinless blood was poured out with potency that atoned for all of God’s elect!

c) At the field of desolation, v. 20.

“For it has been written [γράφω, graphō v ppis] in [the] book [βιβλος, biblos n dsf] of Psalms [ψαλμός, psalmos n grpm], ‘Let his house/homestead [ἐπαυλις, epaulis n nsf] become [γίνομαι, ginomai v apims] deserted/desolate [ἔρημος, erēmos adj nsf],’ and ‘let [εἰμί, eimi v paims] no one dwell [κατοικέω, katoikeō par pansm] in it.’ And ‘let another man [ἕτερος, heteros adj nsm] take [λαμβάνω, lambanō v aaims] his

¹⁰ Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, II, pp. 574-575.

oversight/[apostolic] office [ἐπισκοπή, *episcopē n asf.*].” Here the quotations of Psalm 69:25; 109:8 well reflect the Jewish method of referencing the LXX and making an applied rather than an exactly literal interpretation of the Old Testament.¹¹ However the chief point is that the fruit of a Christ rejecting life, and especially an apostate one, is utter destitution and abandonment *from* grace (Matt. 7:21-23)! Indeed Judas was the supreme apostate whereas Peter was the supreme object of sovereign grace (Luke 5:8; 22:31-32).

(2) The decision for Matthias, vs. 21-26.

Some have maintained that Paul should have filled the apostolic vacancy. This is chiefly based upon subsequent silence concerning Matthias. But Thomas and Andrew are not mentioned again after being referenced in v. 13. Further, if Paul should have been incorporated into the apostolic band, then this would have required that the initial Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit be upon the eleven. However, the statement here by Peter disqualifies Paul since he was not a regular disciple of Jesus from a very early period. Nor, quite obviously, is there the slightest indication, or dissenting apostolic voice, that Peter taking the initiative here was improper. Rather the inclusion of Matthias in the Pentecostal outpouring appears to provide divine confirmation of his appointment.

(a) The qualifications, vs. 21-22.

The following terms of employment indicate that the foundational role of the twelve apostles was to be operative only as long as witnesses to the whole earthly ministry of Christ were living.

1) Personal association with the Lord Jesus’ ministry, v. 21.

“Therefore it is necessary that of those men who have accompanied [συνέρχομαι, *eunerchomai par aagpm*] us all the time [χρόνος, *chronos n dsm*] that the Lord Jesus went in and went out among/with us—”. Straight away, the distinctive qualifications of the twelve apostles become very clear, even though there are other apostles mentioned in the New Testament, notably Paul (I Cor. 15:8-9; Gal. 1:1), also Barnabas (I Cor. 9:5-6; Gal. 2:9 cf. Acts 13:1-2; 14:4, 14), Andronicas and Junias (Rom. 16:7). Perhaps in the Lord’s army there were not only twelve Generals, but also Lieutenant Generals, Major Generals, Brigadier Generals, and those of lesser rank. Apart from the twelve, there was also the

¹¹ “It is not suggested that the primary reference of these two passages is to Judas. In so far, however, as the character of Judas corresponded to the descriptions in Psalm 69 and 109, these passages could be applied to him. The titles of both these Psalms ascribe them to David. As the things said of David were interpreted in a Messianic sense, so David’s enemies could be regarded as foreshadowing the enemies of Christ.” F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary*, p. 78.

seventy (Luke 10:1, 17), and prophets (Acts 13:1; 15:32; Eph. 2:19-20; 4:11).

2) Personal witness of the Lord Jesus' resurrection, v. 22.

“—beginning [ἄρχω, archō par amnsm] from the baptism [βάπτισμα, baptisma n gsn] of John until the day in which He was taken up [ἀναλαμβάνω, analambanō v apis] from us, one of these [must] become [γίνομαι, ginomai inf am] a witness [μάρτυς, martus n asm] with us of His resurrection [ἀνάστασις, anastasis n gsf]. It was soon after Jesus' baptism that He commenced to gather His first five disciples, they being followers of John the Baptist, namely John (?), Andrew, Simon Peter, Philip, and Nathanael (Bartholomew, Matthias?) (John 1:35-51). Hence the twelve had been thoroughly schooled by Christ over the three years of His public ministry. This enabled them later to formulate apostolic doctrine (Acts 2:42; Jude 17), upon which the early church was founded (I Cor. 12:28; Eph. 2:20; 3:4-5; I Tim. 3:15-16).

(b) The nominations, v. 23.

“So they put forward/proposed/nominated [ἵστημι, histēmi v aaip] two, Joseph being called [καλεῶ, kaleō par ppsm] Barsabbas who was also called [ἐπικαλέω, epikaleō v apis] Justus, and Matthaias.” Joseph, son of Sabba, having a Roman name, Justus, was, according to tradition, one of the “seventy” (Luke 10:1, 17). Matthias has been identified with Nathaniel (John 1:45-51). Both candidates were nominated, not simply by Peter, but by the college of apostles.

(c) The invocation, vs. 24-25.

In the absence of Jesus, they pray to, or through Him for specific guidance (John 14:13-14; 15:7, 16; 16:23-24). The inference is that the apostles know that Jesus is not coming back soon, otherwise they would wait.

1) For the Lord's choice, v. 24.

“And having prayed [προσεύχομαι, proseuchomai par amnsm], they said [in their prayer], ‘You Lord know the hearts [καρδιογνώστης, kardiognōstēs n vsm] of all; show [ἀναδείκνυμι, anadeiknumi v aaims] which one of these two You have chosen [ἐκλέγομαι, eklegomai v amis].’” This was a concert of prayer, though not long ago Peter had confessed, with grief, the same thought concerning Jesus' omniscience (John 21:17). However, the will of the Lord was of paramount importance here.

2) For Judas' replacement, v. 25.

“To take/assume [λαμβάνω, lambanō inf aa] the place/office [τόπος, topos n asm] of minister/deacon [διακονία, diakonia n gsf] and apostleship [ἀποστολή, apostolē n gsf] from which Judas turned aside [παράβαίνω, parabainō v aais] to go to his own place [τόπος, topos n asm].” Judas responsibly disqualified Himself and reaped the alternative of “his own place.” This “place” was, according to Jewish understanding of this expression, Gehenna, the place of torment portrayed by the Valley of Hinnon, where the Jews formerly offered their children to Molech (II Kings 23:10; Jer. 7:31; 19:2-6), and later became a place for the burning of refuse, and thus a representation of “hell.” So Christ used this descriptive language concerning the future torment of the wicked (Matt. 5:22, 29-30, 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 12:5).

(d) The determination, v. 26.

“And they gave/cast/drew [δίδωμι, didōmi v aaip] lots [κλῆρος, klēros n nsm] for them, and the lot fell [πίπτω, piptō v aais] on Matthias, and he was added/counted [συγκαταψηφίζομαι, sunkatapsēphizomai v apis] with the eleven apostles.” The practice of casting lots is mentioned seventy times in the Old Testament and seven times in the New Testament. In spite of the many references to casting lots in the Old Testament, nothing is known about the actual lots themselves. They could have been sticks of various lengths, flat stones like coins, or some kind of dice; but their exact nature is unknown. The closest modern practice to casting lots is likely flipping a coin.

The practice of casting lots occurs most often in connection with the division of the land under Joshua (Josh. 14-21), a procedure that God instructed the Israelites on several times in the Book of Numbers (Num. 26:55; 33:54; 34:13; 36:2). God allowed the Israelites to cast lots in order to determine His will for a given situation (Josh. 18:6-10; I Chr. 24:5,31). Various offices and functions in the Temple were also determined by lot (I Chr. 24:5,31; 25:8-9; 26:13-14). The sailors on Jonah's ship (Jonah 1:7) also cast lots to determine who had brought God's wrath upon their vessel. Casting lots eventually became a game people played and made wagers on. This is indicated by the Roman soldiers casting lots for Jesus' garments while He hung on the cross (Matt. 27:35). But here the practice is regarded as being more sacred.

Acts 1:26 is the last reference in Scripture to the casting of lots, and it describes an early apostolic practice that in no way established an ongoing mandatory principle for the Christian church in general. This did not dissuade John Wesley from casting lots concerning the suitability of a lady for marriage, as well as to whether he should publish a sermon that upheld his Arminianism.

However, this is the last revealed act of the pre-Pentecost era. Now all is in place for the dispensation of the universal outpouring of God's saving

grace through Christ's mediation of the Holy Spirit. The divine curtain is about to rise on the first act of the church age. However we study this commencement celebration many centuries later at a time when the last act and finale appear to be upon us. The *dynamic* of this unprecedented spiritual flooding of the world is to be the Holy Spirit. However, the *message content* of this new ministry is the saving person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

3. The power of Pentecost, 2:1-47.

In God's administration of His people since the fall, according to a variety of dispensations, we now come to the inauguration of a momentous spiritual era unlike any before in terms of its scope and signification. Israel had failed to witness, as holy light, to the nations as God had desired (I Chron. 16:23-24, 31; Ps. 46:10; 67:1-7; 86:9; 96:3-10; 117:1-2; Isa. 42:6-7; 49:6). However His purpose of making known His saving grace to the nations of the world would not be abandoned. So the sacrifice or atonement of Jesus Christ established a righteous basis for the redemption of the newly chosen people of God from the four corners of the earth, comprised of both Jew and Gentile. But further, as a consequence, indeed of the necessity of Christ's satisfactory sacrifice, the spiritual outpouring at Pentecost established a complementary, living, regenerative basis for the justified Jew and Gentile. Through Pentecost, the justified sinner is also regenerated, that is made right with and alive unto God (Rom. 6:4, 11; 7:6; I Pet. 2:24).

a. God's inauguration of the Spirit age, 2:1-13.

Here then is the "beginning" [ἀρχή, archē n dsf] of the universal, Christ exalting ministry of the Holy Spirit (Acts 11:15). Throughout the Old Testament era, no comparable ministry of the Spirit of God is to be found. So B. B. Warfield explains:

In the Old Testament, the ministry of the Holy Spirit was "like a pent-in stream; it is now like that pent-in stream with the barriers broken down and the Spirit of the Lord driving it. . . . In one word, that was a day¹² in which the Spirit restrained His power. Now the great day of the Spirit has come.

So this sudden loosening of the flood-gates of the Spirit is described in v. 17, according to Joel 2:28, as, "I will pour fourth My Spirit on all mankind," as with a torrent compared with a sparse shower.

(1) The manifestation of the Holy Spirit, vs. 1-4.

Hence this release of former restraint is wholly God's doing according to His good pleasure, His ordained timing, quite apart from human disinterest, even on the part of rebellious Israel. But what is His reason for doing this? What drives Him to act this way? Martyn Lloyd-Jones writes:

God, the living, active God, sent the mighty, rushing wind. Why does He do it? It is for salvation. "It shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call upon the

¹² B. B. Warfield, *Selected Shorter Writings*, II, p. 717.

name of the Lord shall be saved” (Acts 2:21). Everyone needs to be saved, however great, however illustrious. We are all sinners. We are all born in sin, “shapen in iniquity” (Ps. 51:5). “There is none righteous, no, not one” (Rom. 3:10). The wrath of God is on us all. “All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof fadeth away” (I Pet. 1:24). The greatest lose their faculties. Final illness and decay come to each of us.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike the inevitable hour,
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Thomas Gray

Oh, there is no hope for humanity, the only hope is that God is, and that He is the God who comes down, the God who offers salvation. He sent His only Son into the world, even to the cross to die, his body to be broken, his blood to be shed, so that “whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). . . . The God of the Bible is the God who reveals himself in all the glory and the wonder of his miraculous, eternal power. Thank God for such a message, such a gospel. It made the church. This is what she preached, and on the day of Pentecost three thousand men and women were added to the church.¹³

(a) The unity of the apostles, v. 1.

“And in the day of Pentecost [πεντηκοστή, pentēkostē n gsf] having come [συμπληρώω, sumplēroō inf pp], they were all together [όμου, homou adv] in one place.” It is the fiftieth day after the Passover, also called the Feast of Weeks, the Feast of Harvest, the Feast of First fruits (Exod. 23:16), the latter two titles being especially applicable to the day of the birth of the Christian church. There is about to be a remarkable harvest of souls, worthy of celebration, that will be the first fruits, the initial crop of a universal ingathering (Matt. 22:9; Luke 14:21-23). Furthermore, the “coming together” here, from a Jewish perspective, included a sense of completion of that which Passover had initiated; so here the offering up of God’s Lamb, fifty days prior, also now finds completion in terms of its intended saving effect. Now the antecedent of “they” here is the “they” of 1:26, which is the twelve apostles. They are the first of the first fruits, so to speak, seated, v. 2, and awaiting a unique baptism of the Spirit that will usher in a vast harvest of Spirit baptized believers (I Cor. 12:13).

(b) The sound of the Spirit, v. 2.

“And it came about [γίνομαι, ginomai v amis], suddenly [άφνω, aphnō adv] from heaven, a sound/echoing noise [ήχος, ēchos n nsn] as a rushing/boorn along [φέρω, pherō par ppgsf] violent/forceful [βίαιος, adj gsf] wind/breath [πνοή, pnoē n gsf], and it filled [πληρώω, pleroō v aais] the whole house where they were sitting [κάθημαι, kathēmai par

¹³ Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Authentic Christianity, Volume 1, Acts 1-3*, pp. 30-31.

pmnpm].” Again, the antecedent of “they” here is the “they” of v. 1, that is the twelve apostles. Here was the sound of a descending spiritual tornado that enveloped the house where the apostles were gathered. Here was something to make a noise about! The next great event will also be ushered in with great noise (I Thess. 4:16; cf. Luke 2:13-14). However, the devout international crowd within Jerusalem was also attracted by the sound (vs. 5-6, 9-11). This was a unique visitation, never to be repeated, since it was signifying the commencement of a new age of gospel grace that sin could not subdue or overcome (John 1:5). But the uniqueness of the timing and the phenomena here should not lead us to distance ourselves from the Spirit’s influence Himself. For we who have entered this new fellowship much later down the corridors of church history ought not to be slow in seeking the same Spirit’s blessing. For, “the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace. . . . If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live” (Rom. 8:6, 11-13). So Bianco da Siena, of the fifteenth century has written and taught us to sing in this vein.

Come down, O love divine, seek Thou this soul of mine,
 And visit it with Thine own ardor glowing.
 O Comforter, draw near, within my heart appear,
 And kindle it, Thy holy flame bestowing.
 O let it freely burn, til earthly passions turn
 To dust and ashes in its heat consuming;
 And let Thy glorious light shine ever on my sight,
 And clothe me round, the while my path illuming.

(c) The languages of the Spirit, v. 3.

“And there appeared [ὀράω, horaō v apip] to them distributed/divided [διαμερίζω, diamerizō par pmnpf] tongues/languages/dialects [γλῶσσα glōssa n npf] as fire [πῦρ, pur n gsn] and they rested/sat [καθίζω, kathizō v aais] on each one of them.” The antecedents of “they/them” here are those of 1:26; 2:1-2, that is the twelve apostles. After Jesus’ water baptism there immediately followed His Spirit baptism. At that time John the Baptist saw that “the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove” (Luke 3:22; cf. Matt. 3:16), that is the Holy Spirit marked Him out as the Messiah, the promised Anointed One (Deut. 18:15-19), and approved by God the Father (Matt. 3:17). This was certainly a unique revelation. Yet is there that much difference between a seeming fluttering dove and a flickering flame? Actually the signification here was not by means of real flame, but flame-like, flickering, shimmering, brilliant blades or tongues that sat, presumably on the heads of the twelve. Here then was divine signification of apostolic authenticity; these were the approved of God for all to see and

rightly esteem, especially those believers gathered in that house. Here was divine identification of the first inaugural pillars or foundation stones of Christ's church (I Cor. 12:28; Eph. 2:20).

(d) The utterance of the Spirit, v. 4.

“And they were all filled [πίμπλημι, pimplēmi v apip] with [the] Holy Spirit, and they began [ἄρχω, archō v amip] to speak with/in other [ἕτερος, heteros adj dpf] tongues/ languages [γλῶσσα glōssa n dpf] just as the Spirit gave utterance/impressive speech [ἀποφθέγγομαι, apophthengomai inf pm] to them.” The antecedents of “they/them” here are those of 1:26; 2:1-3, that is the twelve apostles. That this band exclusively experienced such a display of the Spirit is confirmed in vs. 7, 14-15, 37, 43, (cf. II Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:3-4).

1) This filling of the Spirit was fulfilling.

In what way were the twelve apostles “filled” with the Holy Spirit? Were they previously void of the Spirit or merely half full? But what of John 14:17; 20:22? They were distinctively endowed with the Holy Spirit, even as was Jesus, for a very specific calling, in a very significant manner. As with the distribution of varying Spiritual Gifts (I Cor. 12:11, 27-30), an extraordinary effusion such as here is not given to all believers, even though they are all regenerated, made alive by the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 12:13). Such a bestowal is according to eclectic grace for a particular task. For any Christian to seek after such an experience, as many do today, is to challenge the sovereignty and particular wisdom of God. Nevertheless *all* believers ought to “walk in the Spirit” (Gal. 5:16, 25), be “filled with the Spirit” (Eph. 5:18; cf. Col. 3:16) in yielding to Spiritual activity, and manifest the “fruit of the Spirit” (Gal. 5:22-23). We must avoid thinking here in extreme fluid terms; rather we should think of the employment of spiritual equipment through spiritual endowment, bestowment. Thus we are to serve God according to His distinctive calling of us for distinctive service by means of distinctively bestowed gifts and offices. Notice how Peter and the other apostles are subsequently “filled with the Holy Spirit” according to sovereign bestowal for distinctive apostolic ministry that especially focused on bold, impressive proclamation (Acts 4:8, 31), as before (2:4, 14-36).

2) This filling of the Spirit was significant.

Here was supernatural revelation by means of divinely imparted speech in unlearned dialects. Undoubtedly the manner included excitement and enthusiasm. Nevertheless the apostles, distinctively identified with flame-like imagery, were speaking a variety of known, bona fide languages. We reject the claim of the late Kathryn Kuhlman:

We believe in speaking in tongues because the Bible teaches it. Everything that happened on the day of Pentecost should be happening in every church in the world in this very hour.¹⁴

However, what happened at Pentecost, in terms of the phenomena here described, does not happen today, and it did not happen in any of Kathryn Kuhlman's meetings! Then, more specifically, what were the "tongues/languages/dialects" here spoken? Literally, the twelve apostles commenced "speaking with other languages" cf. v. 11 (cf. Phil. 2:11; Rev. 5:9; 7:9-10).

- a) These were *bona fide languages* and not glossolalia or ecstatic utterance and babble as some would identify with I Corinthians 12-14. This was not a miracle of *hearing* a bona fide language through the medium of ecstatic babble, as some claim. This interpretation defies the normal sense here and attempts to avoid the obvious meaning.
- b) These were *supernaturally imparted languages*, by means of the Holy Spirit, being identified as bona fide dialects by a listening, *unbelieving*, astonished assembly of Jews. Certainly there was exuberance and boldness (4:31). Thus many of the Jewish world were impressed, v. 12, while others tried to rationalize the obvious in this happening, v. 13.
- c) These were *recognizeable languages*, being international in variety, vs. 9-11. This is perhaps the most significant fact here since it graphically demonstrated to the world the prospective outreach of the gospel to "the remotest part of the earth" (1:8), that is "every tribe and tongue [γλῶσσα, glōssa] and people" (Rev. 5:9; 7:9-10). The tongues here prefigured subsequent redeemed tongues, tongues that would be loosed to sing the praise of Christ, even as Charles Wesley has penned.

O for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer's praise.
He glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of His grace!

We often become mesmerized with the supernatural and lose sight of the significance and end purpose, namely, "that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord" (Phil. 2:11).

- (2) The witness of the Holy Spirit, vs. 5-13.

It is important to notice that the revelation of God's outpoured Holy Spirit is first to Jerusalem and the Pentecost crowds comprised of all strands of Judaism, according to 1:8 (cf. 3:26; Rom. 1:16). In the mind of God,

¹⁴ Kathryn Kuhlman, *Christianity Today*, vol. xvii, 21, July 20, 1973.

Jerusalem is the center of the world from which His gospel truth is to radiate. Zion is “the apple [pupil] of His eye, . . . the City of Truth, and the mountain of the LORD of hosts” (Zech. 2:8; 8:3).

(a) To Jerusalem Jews, vs. 5-7.

While disarray breaks out amongst the Jerusalem crowd, it is not concerned with a lack of comprehension, as was the case later at Corinth (I Cor, 14:23, 28). Rather it is a question of yielding to plain, even if astonishing, events, as vs. 11-13 indicate. It has been suggested that here is a reversal of the confusion that God imposed at Babel (Gen. 11:1-9); it anticipates future kingdom harmony.

1) They are devout, v. 5.

“Now there were dwelling/living [κατοικέω, katoikeō par panpm] in Jerusalem Jews, godly/pious/devout [εὐλαβής, eulabēs adj nrm] men, from every nation [ἔθνος, ethnos n gsn] under heaven.” They were like Simeon, and the audience of Anna, “looking for the consolation of Israel,” that is “the redemption of Israel” (Luke 2:25, 38). By means of hyperbole, it seemed as though, at this Pentecost season, the whole world of Judaism was present in Jerusalem. Here was a Jewish melting pot, primed to hear preaching that God’s Passover Lamb, “Jesus the Nazarene,” v. 22, had come, been scornfully rejected, and now has risen from the dead!

2) They are bewildered, v. 6.

“And this sound [φωνή, phōnē n gsf] having occurred [γίνομαι, ginomai par amgsf], the crowd [πλήθος, plēthos n nsn] came together and was confounded/ bewildered [συγχέω, suncheō v apis] because each one was hearing [ἀκούω, akouō v iaip] them speak in his own dialect/language [διάλεκτος, dialektos n dsf].” Probably many Jews had trouble communicating in Jerusalem with their foreign mother tongue since they were less able to use Hebrew. But here was a divine “translation service,” courtesy of twelve untaught Galileans, that communicated one saving message.

3) They are astonished, v. 7.

“They were beside themselves/amazed [ἐξίστημι, existēmi v imip] and marveled/were astonished [θαυμάζω, thaumazō v iaip], saying, ‘Behold, are not all these who are speaking [λαλέω, laleō παρ πανπμ] Galileans? [Yes, they are!’]” The common expectation was that God would surely speak through the Jewish scholars of Jerusalem, the Pharisees and Scribes and Rabbis. However a true work of the Holy Spirit often uses unexpected, even shocking means to gain the attention of a watching, religious world (cf. Acts

4:13; 10:9-16). So “God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise” (I Cor. 1:27).

(b) To multi-racial Jews, vs. 8-11.

Here was an initial representation of “the gospel of the kingdom [that] shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come” (Matt. 24:14). It was not intended to be an ongoing *modus operandi* that later was supplanted by missionary language learning and Christian translators due to waning faith.

1) By indigenous languages, v. 8.

“And how is it that each one of us hears [ἀκούω, akouō v paip] his own dialect/language in which he was born [γεννάω, gennaō v apip]?” J. Rawson Lumby comments:

There is no description here of any jargon or incoherent speech. We are told of utterances tested by the ears of men who had spoken these languages from their youth.¹⁵

However, at this stage, the audience was more occupied with the media employed rather than the message proclaimed. Yet even the apostles were most likely amazed at the God-given ability they were now employing. Nevertheless they spoke the gospel concerning Christ based upon their knowledge of the truth, and God gave it wings!

2) By international languages, vs. 9-11.

“⁹Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and those dwelling [κατοικέω, katoikeō par panpm] in Mesopotamia, Judea and Capadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts/districts/provinces [μέρος, meros n apn] of Libya near Cyrene, and those journeying/visiting [ἐπιδημέω epidēmeō par panpm] from Rome, both Jews and proselytes/god-fearing sojourners [προσήλυτος, prosēlutos n nrm], ¹¹Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking [λαλέω, laleō par pagpm] in our own languages [γλῶσσα, glōssa] the great/splendid/grand things/works/deeds [μεγαλεῖον, megaleion adj apn] of God.”

a) By languages of the visiting diaspora, vs. 10-11a.

The vast area represented here includes from India to southern Europe to North Africa to Arabia. It is important to understand that these Passover/ Pentecost pilgrims will return home as missionaries, many having become Christians, with

¹⁵ Rawson Lumby, *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 96.

news of remarkable happenings in Jerusalem. The disciples Paul later meets at Ephesus may have been present at this time (Acts 19:1-7). Possibly the church at Rome was founded by these returnees who were later visited by Paul (Acts 28:14-15).

b) By languages of the testifying diaspora, v. 11b.

What were these messages of “the great/wonderful works/deeds of God” or more literally “the great things of God”? These were grand and splendid things. So in the Old Testament, as the aged Psalmist reflects over divine providence since his youth, he proclaims: “For Your righteousness, O God, reaches to the heavens, You who have done great things; O God, who is like You?” (Ps. 71:17-19, LXX). Here now at Jerusalem was lively truth that the mind could grasp, and not merely ecstatic feelings, notwithstanding the obvious fact that the apostles declared their message with great boldness and passion. The suggestion is that here was the heralding of most obvious, glorious truth, that which anyone living in Jerusalem would now know about, “the things about Jesus the Nazarene” (Luke 24:18). Certainly the apostles had been well prepared, over the last four years, for proclaiming “the great things of God.” However there was the added feature here of powerful, authoritative, arresting proclamation that sought submission in saving faith.

Perhaps an example of this message was that which Simeon declared, being led by the Spirit, upon holding the baby Jesus in his arms. “Lord, . . . my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a Light of revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel” (Luke 2:29-32). Then there was the ministry of Anna, also led by the Spirit as a prophetess. Upon hearing the testimony of Simeon, “she came up and began giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem” (Acts 2:38). And this was before Pentecost!

(c) To incredulous Jews, vs. 12-13.

It is a remarkable fact that where the revelation of God is made known, it seems almost inevitable that positive and negative responses follow (cf. Luke 12:51-53; John 7:12, 40-43; 9:16; 10:19-21). In other words, the truth of God brings about disagreement and conflict (John 1:5; 3:19-20). So the person and work of Jesus Christ is, to a large degree, offensive to this world, and especially here with regard to His lavish imparting of the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7). The early church was born in the midst of controversy (Acts 4:1-4; 8:1; 11:19).

- 1) With questioning perplexity, v. 12.

“And they all were being amazed/surprised [ἐξίστημι, existēmi v imip] and were being greatly perplexed [διαπορέω, diaporeō v iaip], saying to one another, ‘What do you desire/want/think [θέλω, thelēō v pais] this to be?’” Obviously this large group of auditors was more credulous, accepting that perhaps a work of God was happening before them, even if they were unable to arrive at a rational explanation. After all, a string of astonishing events during the last two months could not be discounted. Hence a true work of God is certainly arresting (Matt. 7:28; 8:27; 9:33; 12:23; 21:20; 22:21-22) and never boring!

- 2) With skeptical derision, v. 13.

“But others were mocking/ridiculing/jeering [διαχλευάζω, diachleuazō par panpm] saying that, ‘they have been full [μεστοῦ, mestoō par ppnpm] of new/sweet wine [γλεῦκος, gleukos n gsn].” Clearly the apostles spoke with great passion and fervor, so much so that they were scornfully derided as being intoxicated, as crazy religious enthusiasts. During the Great Awakening of the eighteenth century, Wesley, Whitefield, Newton, and others were charged by the established church with degrees of “enthusiasm,” it being portrayed as subjective experience and a form of extra-biblical revelation. So Wesley responded with a cautionary sermon titled *The Nature of Enthusiasm* based on Acts 26:24, where Paul was charged by King Agrippa with being “mad/out of his mind”!

- b. Peter’s opening of the church age, 2:14-21.

The significance of Peter’s initiative here in this church commencement proclamation is not to be overlooked. He had been told by Christ, “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven” (Matt. 16:19). So now, according to divine appointment, these keys are first employed for the initial invitation of sinners to believe in Christ and thus populate the church.

- (2) The reasoned explanation of Peter, vs. 14-15.

This inaugural Christian sermon is comprised of three major aspects. First there is Scriptural explanation of the extraordinary circumstances associated with the assembled Galilean apostles, vs. 14-21. Second there is the main thrust, the essential Christian message that is to be preached throughout the whole wide world. It concerns Jesus Christ’s supernaturally attested life, His death, then His resurrection, ascension and session beside the Father, vs. 22-36. Third there is Peter’s call for repentance resulting in a great harvest and fervent fellowship among those newly converted, vs. 37-47.

(a) His apostolic proclamation, v. 14.

“But Peter, having stood [ἵστημι, histēmi par apnsm] with the eleven, lifted up [ἐπαίρω, epairō v aais] his voice and addressed/declared [ἀποφθέηρομαι, apophthengomai v amis] to them, ‘Men of Judea, and all those living [κατοικέω, katoicheō par pavpm] in Jerusalem, let this be [εἰμί, eimi v paims] known [γνωστός, gnōstos adj nsn] to you and give attention [ἐνωρίζομαι, enōtizomai v amimp] to my words.’” Here is the character of Christian proclamation, it being vigorous, standing assertion, the heralding (8:5; 9:20; 10:40-42; 20:25; 28:31) of divine truth. Here apophthengomai means to speak forth, but added to this was a “raised voice” passionately addressing a large crowd. Mere discussion groups, interactive teaching and lecturing were not sufficient here!

(b) His apostolic justification, v. 15.

“For these men are not drunk/intoxicated [μεθύω, methuō v pais] as you suppose/imagine [ὑπολαμβάνω, hupolambanō v paip], for it is [only] the third hour [τρίτος, tritos adj nsf] of the day [hēmera, n gsf].” The Jews would eat bread in the morning, then meat with wine much later in the day. But here it is only approximately 9 am! In any case, those stupefied through alcohol are not known for their clarity of expression! Rather all of the apostles are “under the influence” of the Holy Spirit (cf. Eph. 5:18-19; Col. 3:16).

(3) The Scriptural explanation of Peter, vs. 16-21.

An understanding of how the Old Testament is quoted or referenced in the New Testament is a most vital matter for the Gentile Christian. The Jewish Christian, familiar with a Jewish understanding of the Old Testament or Tanach, is more often better able to appreciate the ways the Jews of the New Testament would employ the Old Testament with which the Gentile Christian is unfamiliar. We are now confronted with a primary example of this matter since Peter, Jewish to the core, now quotes from the Septuagint version of the Old Testament before a large Jewish congregation.

(a) The recourse to Joel, v. 16.

“But this is what was spoken [λέγω, legō par ppnsn] through the prophet [προφήτης, prophētēs n gsm] Joel [Ἰωήλ, Iōel n gsm].” That Peter can so freely quote from the Old Testament here suggests his considerable knowledge of the Tanach (cf. I Pet. 1:24-25; 2:6-10, 22; 3:10-12; 4:18), even as was augmented by the recent teaching of his Lord. It is vital that, while Joel 2:28-32 is about to be quoted, understanding of the broader context of Joel 2:1-3:21 is important. Joel 2:1-27 is concerned that “the day of the LORD is coming,” v. 1, surely a sobering eschatological prospect regarding the land of Israel’s judgment, “a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness. . . . The day of the Lord is indeed great and very awesome, and who can

endure it?” (Joel 2:2, 22). Then follows Israel’s deliverance, according to the LORD’s covenant faithfulness, concerning which Jewish history from postexilic times to date finds no parallel. As a result: “You will have plenty to eat and be satisfied and praise the name of the LORD your God, Who has dealt wondrously with you; then My people will never be put to shame. Thus you will know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the LORD your God, and there is no other, and My people will never be put to shame” (Joel 2:26-27). Then follows Joel 2:28-32 quoted by Peter, after which the previous eschatological prospect is reviewed, namely conflict between Israel and the nations in “the valley of Jehoshaphat,” then deliverance by the “Lord roaring from Zion,” after which “Jerusalem will be holy, and strangers will pass through it no more,” and “Judah will be inhabited forever and Jerusalem for all generations. . . . For the LORD dwells in Zion” (Joel 3:2, 12, 16-17, 20-21.) So Peter is not reinterpreting Joel; rather he is referencing the initial stage of its fulfillment.

(b) The revelation of Joel, vs. 17-21.

To understand this historic gift of the Holy Spirit it is vital to grasp the import of John 7:38-39; cf. 14:26; 15:26; 16:7. Through His atonement, Jesus Christ purchased this outpouring for “the last days” (Heb. 1:1-2; II Tim. 3:1; Jas. 5:3; cf. “last times” I Pet. 1:20), which period is the Church age that separates His first from His second coming. Hence, the fulfillment of the Spirit’s coming here does not negate ongoing fulfillment and the same Spirit’s eschatological outpouring at the end of “the last days,” especially with regard to the saving of Israel (Ezek. 36:24-28; 37:1-14; Rom. 11:26-28). The *full* picture of Joel makes this quite clear.¹⁶

But Peter’s goal here is not principally to explain the present supernatural phenomena to an astonished crowd. Rather He wants to justify it from Scripture and then move on to the vital matter of v. 21, the call of sinful Israel to repentance. So in Acts 17:22-34, while Paul makes explanation about the “unknown God” of Athens, He is anxious to declare that this “God is now declaring to men that all men everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead” (vs. 23, 30-31). As a result some sneered, some equivocated, and some believed (vs. 32-34).

1) The Spirit of revelation, v. 17.

“‘And it shall be in the last days,’ God says, ‘I will pour [ἐκχέω, ekcheō v fais] forth My Spirit on all flesh, and your sons [υἱός, huios n nrm] will prophesy [προφητεύω, prophēteuō v faip], and your daughters [θυγάτηρ, thugatēr n npf], and your young

¹⁶ Carl B. Hoch, Jr., *All Things New*, pp. 294-296.

[νεανίσκος, neaniskos n nrm,] men shall see [ὄραω horaō v fmip] visions [ὄρασις, horasis n apf], and your old men [πρεσβύτερος, presbuteros] shall dream [ἐνυπνιάζομαι, enupniazomai v fpip] dreams [ἐνύπνιον, enupnion n dpn].” This universal endowment of the Holy Spirit “on all flesh,” even all categories of human kind, is at the very heart of the distinctive ministry that commenced at Pentecost (1:8; 2:39; 9:15; 10:44-45; 11:17-18; 13:46-49; 18:6; 22:20-21; 26:19-20, 23; 28:28-31) and contrasts with the more local outpouring upon the nation of Israel in the Old Testament. So B. B. Warfield comments:

The new dispensation is the dispensation of the Spirit because in it the Spirit of God is poured out upon all flesh. . . . [I]t is symbolized in the miraculous attestation by which it is inaugurated—in the tongues that distributed themselves on the heads of the agents of the new proclamation—“as if of fire”—and in the “gift of tongues” by which the universality of their mission was intimated. . . . [W]e may say that the new dispensation is the dispensation of the Spirit, because the Spirit now works in the hearts of God’s people with a more prevailing and a more pervading force. We cannot doubt that He regenerated and sanctified the souls of God’s saints in the old dispensation. . . . And yet we seem to be not merely authorized but compelled to look upon the mode of the Spirit’s work as more powerful and prevailing in the new dispensation than in the old.”¹⁷

It could also be claimed that the period of Jesus Christ’s first earthly visitation evidenced prophecy (Zacharias, Luke 1:67-69; John the Baptist, Luke 1:76; 7:26-27; Caiaphas, John 11:49-51; Judas and Silas, Acts 15:32; Philip’s daughters, Acts 21:9; Agabus, Acts 21:10-11; also I Cor. 11:5; Acts 19:6; Eph. 2:20; 3:5; 4:11), and dreams and visions (Zacharias, Luke 1:22; Joseph, Matt. 1:20; the wise men, Matt. 2:12; Peter, James, John, (Matt. 17:9; Pilate’s wife, Matt. 27:19; the women at the tomb, Luke 24:3-4; Ananias, Acts 9:10; Cornelius, Acts 10:3; Peter at Caesarea, Acts 10:9-19; Paul, Acts 16:9; 18:9-10; II Cor. 12:1). Yet in no way does this exclude similar and even more climactic supernatural indications of His second coming during the last of the last days according to Joel 2-3.

2) The Spirit of prophesy, v. 18.

“Even on My men-servants [δούλος, doulos n apm] and on My women-servants [δούλη, doulē n apf], in those days I will pour out [ἐκκέω, ekcheō v fais] from My Spirit, and they shall prophesy [προφητεύω, prophēteuō v faip].” Even menial employees will be included as agents of God’s revelation. The prospect here of “prophecy” is Peter’s editorial comment; it surely focuses upon Spirit animated proclamation rather than prediction, heralding judgment and gospel (John 3:36; Acts 17:30-31).

¹⁷ B. B. Warfield, *Faith & Life*, pp. 140-141, 143-144.

3) The Spirit of wonders, v. 19-20.

a) In the sky above and the earth below, v. 19.

“And I will give/grant [δίδομι, didōmi v fais] wonders/omens [τέρας, teras n apn] in the heaven/sky above [ἄνω, anō adv] and signs [σημεῖον, semeion n apn] on the earth/land below [κάτω, katō adv].” At the birth of Christ there were signs in the sky (Matt. 2:2; Luke 2:13). Furthermore, at the death of Jesus, “the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth shook and the rocks were split. The tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection they entered the holy city and appeared to many” (Matt. 27:52-53). Yet this is hardly a full fulfillment of Joe 2-3.

b) In anticipation of the day of the Lord, v. 20.

“The sun [ἥλιος, helios n nsm] will be turned/changed [μεταστρέφω, metastrephō v fpis] into darkness [σκότος, skotos n asn] and the moon [σελήνη, selēnē n nsf] into blood [αἷμα, haima n asn] before the great [μέγας, megas adj asf] and glorious/illustrious/notable [ἐπιφανής, epiphanēs] day of the Lord shall come [ἔρχομαι, erchomai inf aa].” Here we move into a realm that finds no fulfillment at the close of Jesus’ ministry or immediately following, and especially concerning “the great and glorious day of the Lord.” Such an event has reference to the second coming of the Lord Jesus (I Cor. 1:8; 3:13; 5:5; Phil. 1:6, 10; II Thess. 2:2-3; II Pet. 3:10; cf. Isa. 13:6-9; Ezek. 30:3; Joel 1:15; 2:1-2; 2:11, 31; 3:14; Obad. 1:15; Zeph. 1:7, 14, 18). Then why does Peter include this here? Because he wants to focus on v. 21, which truth is so applicable to the gospel age that is now dawning upon the world.

4) The Spirit of salvation, v. 21.

“And it shall be that everyone [πᾶς, pas adj nsm] who calls on [ἐπικαλέω, epikaleō v amss] the name of the Lord [Κυριος, Kurios n gsm] shall be saved [σωζω, sōzō v fpis].” Note that like Luke here, Paul also quotes Joel 2:32a in Romans 10:13, without at all nullifying the eschatological context of v. 32b. It is simply the extraction of a broad principle that John 3:16 and Acts 16:31 similarly represent. So Paul writes that, “there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call upon Him; for whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved” (Rom. 10:12-13).

a) What is it to call on the name of the Lord?

First it is a cry that addresses the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and Him alone, as vs. 22, 38 indicate. Then it is the cry of a human soul that is at the end of its tether, having a sense of nakedness save being clothed with blame; it is desperate since human effort has proved barren; it has learned of the futility and myth of human resourcefulness, self-help, and especially in the realm of religion; it has experienced the vanity of worldly solutions, as well as the fruit of guilt, despair, anxiety, depression, frustration, anguish and restlessness; it has rightly concluded that it is fundamentally alienated from God, and thus in conflict with Him, even as an unholy enemy. At the same time it is to learn, from this very same God Himself, that He is most merciful and delights in the lost prodigal seeking mercy, that is simply by calling out for deliverance, as Isaiah 1:18-20; 55:1-3 both invites and warns.

b) What is it to be saved?

It is to find that the Son of God, being true to His repeated promises and urgings (Matt. 11:28-30; John 7:37-38), is He alone who can save the soul, lost in the sight of God, and so bring about reconciliation with God. Hence, through Jesus' answer to the sinner's call, like sinking Peter on the Sea of Gallilee who cried out, "Lord, save me!" (Matt. 14:30), the outcome is pardon by God for guilt, peace with God for anxiety, and rest in the presence of God for restlessness. So with Peter and those with him after being rescued, the result was that "they worshiped Him [the Lord]," and offered the passionate confession, "You are certainly God's Son! (Matt. 14:33). Here then is the basic gospel message that will be proclaimed consistently through to the end of Acts (2:37-40; 3:18-19; 4:10-12; 5:29-32; 9:20; 10:38-43; 13:26-39; 16:30-31; 17:3, 30-31; 20:21, 24-25, 32; 22:14-15; 26:6-18; 28:20, 28, 30-31). And it is still the one and only gospel message that brings reconciliation for any guilty man or woman, estranged from God (Isa. 59:2).

c. Peter's proclamation of Jesus Christ, 2:22-36.

Peter is not initially driven by an attempt to endear himself with unbelieving Israel, by means of which he might more easily garner "decisions for Christ." Rather he commences by drawing attention to the bad news, the unvarnished, ugly truth of messianic humiliation and homicide, for which his audience is responsible, that yet is trumped by divine resurrection.

- (1) The preaching of Jesus' resurrection, vs. 22-24.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the focal point of the apostolic gospel, as here with vs. 24-36, though not as if to play down the atoning work of God's slain Lamb. The reason is probably that in a society where crucifixions, with all of their groaning agony, were common place in the environs of Jerusalem, it is the *risen* Son of God that distinguishes him from all other such executions.

- (a) The Man Jesus was attested to by signs performed by God, v. 22.

“Men, [being] Israelites, hear/listen [ἀκούω, akouō v aaimp] to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man having been attested/authenticated [ἀποδείκνυμι, apodeiknumi par ppsm] to you by God with powers/miracles [δυναμεις, dunamis n dpf] and wonders/marvels [τέρας, teras n dpn] and signs/pointers [σημεῖον, sēmeion n dpn] which God performed [ποιέω, poieō v aais] through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know [οἶδα, oida v paip].” This Jesus of Israel is the theanthropic person, the God-man; both His perfect humanity and absolute deity are certified by means of supernatural works and incomparable words. Here Peter affirms that which was at the heart of Jesus' indictment (John 5:18; 10:33). Jesus Himself has described His “works which no one else did” (John 15:24); as the Son of God, they are in fact the works of His Father (John 5:17, 36; 10:37). Of His words, Jewish temple officers said, “Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks” (John 7:46; cf. Matt. 7:28). So the fact that a catalogue of Jesus' works is not deemed necessary here suggests His widespread reputation. Hence we might well ask at this juncture, “Where is Lazarus?” and a host of recipients of the healing mercy of Christ? They may indeed be listening at this very moment!

- (b) The Man Jesus was crucified according to the plan of God, v. 23.

“This man, determined/marked out/delivered/handed over [ὀρίζω, horizō par ppsf] by the will [βουλή, boulē n dsf] and foreknowledge/foreordination [πρόγνωσις, prognōsis n dsf] of God, delivered up [ἔκδοτος, ekdotos adj asm] through the hands of lawless men [ἄνομος, anomos], [who] having nailed/fastened [προσπήνυμι, prospēgnumi par aanpm, to a cross] you killed/executed [ἀναιρέω, anaireō v aaip].”

- 1) The sovereignty of God in the death of Jesus.

The death of Jesus Christ was fundamentally an ordained, planned work of His Father (Isa. 53:6, 10; Heb. 10:7-10), not human devising. Hence the “foreknowledge” here was not prescience, as if God was merely a good Predictor, but “foreordination/forelove” in terms of eternity past (cf. Rom. 11:2; I Pet. 1:20 KJV). On this account the “hands of lawless men” were not less free, but like Joseph's conniving wicked brethren who were

nevertheless subject to God's overriding good purpose (Gen. 50:20). The same principle applies then with regard to God's saving of sinners. The Bible solicits faith, yet it is aroused and imparted by God according to His sovereign, particular purpose. So:

I sought the Lord, and afterward I knew
 He moved my soul to seek him, seeking me;
 It was not I that found, O Savior true,
 No, I was found of thee.

2) The responsibility of man in the death of Jesus.

At the same time these "hands of lawless men" were fully accountable for their evil designs, here being also described as the hands of "godless men," a "perverse generation," v. 40 (cf. 2:36; 4:27). We earlier saw in vs. 16-20 that Judas was fully accountable for his foul betrayal that yet was part of God's sovereign and holy purpose. Consider C. H. Spurgeon's commentary here on vs. 22-23.

How boldly he [Peter] puts the truth before his hearers! He charges home the murder of Christ upon them, yet he skillfully softens it by that introduction about "the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." This is a very wonderful verse, because it shows us that everything is predetermined and foreknown by God; and yet when men do wickedly, they are responsible for it. "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." There is no man in this world who knows where these two great truths of man's free agency and divine predestination meet. There have been all sorts of schemes and inventions to make the two doctrines agree; and one set of men has denied one of the truths, and another set has denied the other; but do you nothing of the kind. Believe them both, yet do not pretend that you can reconcile them. It may be that, in another state, with larger capacity of mind than we at present possess, we shall be able to reconcile these two truths. I am not sure that we shall do so; and I do not know that even angels can understand this great mystery; but it is a grand thing to exercise faith where we cannot comprehend what is revealed to us. He who only believes what he can understand will have a very short creed, and soon he will have none at all; but he who believes what he cannot understand, simply because it is taught him by revelation from God, is the man who walks humbly with his God, and he shall be accepted. I thank God for the mystery that conceals so much from us; where would there be room for faith if all things were as plain as A B C?¹⁸

¹⁸ C. H. Spurgeon, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, 47:2712 (Albany, OR: Ages Software, 1998), 78.

We find refuge neither in “free will” nor in the “nullification, neglect or abuse of faith.” Man as a dead sinner is yet accountable for his lack of faith while God sovereignly turns the particular, elect sinful heart to faith. The reason we declare this is because God’s Word plainly declares it, for the child of God is born, “not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:13). But now further, God’s sovereignty also rose above man’s hatred of His Son by raising Him from the dead.

- (c) The Man Jesus was raised from the dead by the power of God, v. 24.

“Whom God raised [ἀνίστημι, anistēmi v aais], having loosed/released [λύω, luō par aansm, Him] from the birth pains/agonies [ὠδίν, ōdin n apf] of death [θάνατος, thanatos n gsm] since it was not possible [δυνατός, dunatos adj nsn] for Him to be kept/held [κρατέω, krateō inf pp] by it.” The point is that of all the myriads of crosses that have marred the Jerusalem landscape, only the cross of Jesus has resulted in His resurrection by the God of Abraham. And this is supreme triumph, for He causes the wrath of man to praise Him (Ps. 76:10). Indeed defeat by death was impossible while victory was inevitable because of the inherent power and sovereignty of God. So Fanny Crosby has written:

Christ hath risen! Hallelujah!
 Blessed morn of life and light!
 Lo, the grave is rent asunder,
 Death is conquered through His might.

And so is the hardened, rebellious human will “conquered through His might. Ask Paul, and he will tell you this is so!

- (2) The proof of Jesus’ resurrection, vs. 25-36.

From a worldly perspective the empty tomb of Jesus had already provided an unsolvable, frustrating problem. The fact that the body of Jesus had not been recovered could only be answered by the weak, fabricated proposal of the chief priests and elders that the disciples had stolen it (Matt. 28:11-15). Had this in reality been the case, the recovery of Jesus’ body would not have been so difficult. But now fifty days after Jesus’ resurrection, the body has still not been found. However from a religious point of view, that of the Jews of Israel gathered for Passover and Pentecost, another vital matter has presented itself. It concerns the question of not only ongoing messianic claims about Jesus, but also the proclamation of Messiah’s resurrection, from a biblical perspective. This issue Peter now addresses.

- (a) The revelation of David, vs. 25-28.

Again we are faced with the quotation by Peter, from the Old Testament, as with Joel 2:28-32 in vs. 17-21, of Psalm 16:8-11, from the LXX. Again we wonder if Peter’s teaching here is in fact that which his risen Lord imparted during the forty days of post-resurrection

ministry (Luke 24:26-27, 44-46). It is highly likely to be the case, especially since Paul at Pisidian Antioch, later purposely renouncing any dependence upon Peter (Gal. 1:11-12; 2:6-9), yet uses the same Scriptural reasoning as Peter does here (Acts 13:35-37). As an orthodox Jew, Peter had always believed in a future day of resurrection, but now the resurrections of Jairus' daughter (Mark 5:21-24, 35-43), the widow's son at Nain (Luke 7:11-17), Lazarus (John 11:38-44; 12:1-2, 9-11), all resuscitations, and supremely the Lord Jesus, have expanded his understanding, especially of Scripture (I Pet. 1:3, 21; 3:21-22).

1) About the presence of the Lord, v. 25.

“For David says of Him, ‘I saw [προοράω, prooraō v imis] the Lord always before/in front of [ἐνώπιον, enōpion pre] me, for He is at my right hand, so that I will not be shaken/moved [σαλεύω, saleuo v apss].” Psalm 16, like Psalm 2 is plainly about David, yet it transports us to a higher messianic level. Both Peter and Paul *do not* deny that David is ultimately promised resurrection here; but they do declare the primacy of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, “the first fruits of those who are asleep” (I Cor. 15:20-23), by which David will eventually be raised. So David in effect says of Christ, “I (the Lord Jesus) saw the Lord (the Father) in My presence. For He (the Father) is at My right hand, so that I (the Son) will not be shaken.” There is probably allusion here to the Father's support of His Son at His crucifixion, as well as anticipation of Stephen (7:55-56).

2) About the enjoyment of the Lord, v. 26.

“Therefore my heart rejoiced/was glad [εὐφραίνω, euphrainō v apis] and my tongue [γλῶσσα, glōssa n nsf] exulted [ἀγαλλιάω, agalliō v amis]; moreover my flesh [σάρξ, sarx n nsf] also will live/dwell [κατασκηνώω, v fais] in hope [ἐλπίς, elpis n dsf].” David further continues, “Therefore My (the Lord Jesus') heart was glad and My (his) tongue exulted.” Here is the Son's post-resurrection rejoicing in His deliverance by His Father.

3) About the resurrection hope of the Lord, v. 27.

“Because You will not leave/abandon [ἐγκαταλείπω, enkataleipō v fais] my heart/soul [ψυχή, psuchē n asf] to Hades [ᾗδης, hadēs n asm], nor yield/permit/allow [δίδωμι, didōmi v fais] Your Holy One [ὅσιος, hosios adj asm] to see/undergo/experience [ὁράω, horao inf aa] corruption/decay [διαφθορά, diaphthora n asf].” David further continues, “Because You (the Father) will not abandon My (the Lord Jesus') soul to Hades, nor allow Your Holy One (the Son) to undergo decay.” The Father's sovereign commitment to His Son is absolute, so that this Son, like Abraham (Heb. 11:19), is confident that sin and death will not have dominion over Him (cf. Rom. 6:9, 14)). Here was the Son of

God's supreme humiliation, that "the Holy One" should descend into the abode of unholiness, darkness, corruption. Yet as Spurgeon explains concerning Jesus' descent into the grave:

He knew that the visit of his soul to Sheol, or the invisible world of disembodied spirits, would be a very short one, and that his body in a very brief space would leave the grave, uninjured by its sojourn there.¹⁹

4) About the resurrection deliverance by the Lord, v. 28.

"You have made known [γνωρίζω, gnōrizō v aais] to me the ways/paths [ὁδός, hodos n apf] of life; You will make me full [πληρώω, plērōō v fais] of joy/gladness [εὐφροσύνη, euphrosunē n gsf] with Your presence [πρόσωπον, prosōpon n gsn]." David further continues, "You (the Father) have made known to Me (the Son) the ways of life; You (the Father) will make Me (the Son) full of gladness with Your (the Father's) presence." Here is a prophetic revelation of the relationship between the Son and His Father upon His return to His bosom. Here is post-resurrection exultation by the Son in the Father's deliverance from death to life, and being seated at His side. And if the Son now exults in risen life with His Father, it is inevitable that those who follow Christ "the first fruits" (I Cor. 15:20, 23) will also inherit risen life and gladness. And this indeed is the inevitable response of the biblical Christian (Rom. 6:9-11; II Cor. 13:4).

(b) The reasoning from David, vs. 29-36.

Here is Peter's QED (quad erat demonstrandum), "that which was to be demonstrated/proved," according to biblical revelation. Here is appeal to objective authority concerning the resurrection of Jesus Christ for subsequent centuries, not mere verbally transmitted hearsay. But further, for the fledgling Christian church this authority was rooted in the Old Testament. Could you witness from this same revelation in the manner Peter does, and with the same weight of proclamation?

1) The present death of David, vs. 29-31.

The multi-chambered tomb of King David was surely the most celebrated within the City of David (I Kings 2:10; II Chron. 29:28; Neh. 3:16), that is Jerusalem, as well as its environs. Its location was approximately no more than 1000 yards from the upper room where Peter is presently addressing a large crowd. David died at the age of 70.

¹⁹ C. H. Spurgeon, *Treasury of David*, I, p. 221.

a) His evident tomb, v. 29.

“Men, brethren, it is lawful/proper [ἔξεστι, exesti par pansn] to say with boldness/frankness [παρρησία, parrēsia n gsf] before you concerning the patriarch [πατριάρχης, patriarchēs n gsm] David that he died [τελευτάω, teleutaō] and was buried [θάπτω, thaptō v apis], and his tomb [μνήμα, n nsn] is with us until/to [ἄχρι, achri pre] this day.” As a patriarch, David is ranked with Abraham (Heb. 7:4) and the sons of Jacob (Acts 7:8-9). Conservative (Pharisaic) Judaism believed in resurrection, especially of the righteous, yet only at the day of universal judgment before God (Ps. 49:15; 73:24; Dan. 12:2-3; Isa. 26:19). But for the present, David is in Sheol, the bode of the dead, which for the Jews includes both heaven and hell.

b) His hope in God’s promise, v. 30-31.

So Peter presses home with additional Scriptural force the resurrection of Christ as also being part of the fulfillment of the Davidic covenant.

i) Psalm 132:11; v. 30.

“Therefore being [ὑπάρχω, huparchō par pansm] a prophet [προφήτης, prophētēs], and knowing [ὄρώ, horaō par pfansm] that God had sworn [ὀμνύω, omnuō v aais] an oath [ὄρκος, horkos n dsm] to seat [καθίζω, kathizō v inf aa] the fruit [καρπός, karpos n gsm] of his loins [ὄσφύς, osphus n gsf] on His throne [θρόνος, thronos n asm].” The point is that the seed of David has a future. In this sense, God has not finished with David, even as He earlier made a covenant promise to him of an eternal kingdom (II Sam. 7:8-17; cf. Ps. 89:34-37). However, David’s “fruit” or seed, initially Solomon, was ultimately to be Messiah (3:24-26; Gal. 3:16).

ii) Psalm 16:10; v. 31.

“Having looked ahead/foreseen [προοράω, prooraō par aansm] this, he [David] spoke [λαλέω, laleō v aais] concerning the resurrection [ἀνάστασις, anastasis n gsf] of the Christ that, ‘neither was he [His soul] abandoned [ἔγκατελείπω, ankataleipō v apis] in Hades, nor would his flesh [σάρξ, sarx n nsf] see corruption/decay [διαφθορά, diaphthora n asf].” Thus David spoke prophetically of Jesus as the promised risen Messiah., even as we sing:

Hail to the Lord's anointed, great David's
greater Son!

Hence resurrection is an essential part of Messiah's
promised ministry; it is to be expected. So look around
for it, says Peter!

2) The present resurrection of Jesus, vs. 32-36.

Thus Jesus' resurrection is the vindication, not only of Him being the Son of God, and the fulfillment of the Word of God just expounded, but also "the house of Israel's" promised Messiah, v. 36.

a) The apostolic witness to Jesus, v. 32.

"This Jesus God raised up [ἀνίστημι, anistēmi v aais] to which we are all witnesses [μάρτυς, martus n npm]." If anyone opposed to Jesus had evidence of His dead body, then now was the time to speak up since Peter declares, "we [the twelve apostles] are all witnesses [of His resurrection]." However silence in this regard, and the conviction of v. 37 suggests that there was now wider agreement that Jesus had indeed risen from the dead. So this truth begins to percolate amongst the crowd. Though to believe that Jesus has risen from the dead is one thing; to yield before it personally is quite another. So Peter provides further arousal by elaborating upon the fuller meaning, the interpretation of the fact of this unique, historic event. Again, surely Peter draws further upon instruction received from Jesus only days before.

b) The Holy Spirit's witness to Jesus, v. 33.

"Therefore, having been lifted up/exalted [ὑψόω, hupsoō par apnsm] to the right hand of God, [and] having received [λαμβάνω, lambanō par aansm] the promise [ἐπαγγελία, epangelia n asf] of the Holy Spirit from the Father, He has poured out/shed forth [ἐκχέω, ekcheō v aais] this which you both see [βλέπω, blepō v paip] and hear [ἀκούω, akouō]." Like an encased watch, there is a simplicity in the Christian gospel (John 3:16; Acts 16:30-31) that should not be allowed to cloud undergirding complexity (Rom. 3:21-26; Eph. 1:3-14). There is also a sequence of events, and here such a panorama of redemption is also revealed. We also see this same sequence similarly revealed in John 7:38-39.

i) *Humiliation* by the Father results in exaltation before the Father. Christ is exalted from the darkness of the grave, having born sin, to the very presence of His holy Father (Phil. 2:8-9).

- ii) *Exaltation* before the Father results in session beside the Father. Such elevation is to His right hand, results in the honor of being seated because of the work of redemption being completed (Heb. 1:3; 10:12).
 - iii) *Session* beside the Father results in promise from the Father. Being seated beside His Father, in His bosom as it were, Christ intercedes for His disciples so that they might receive the Holy Spirit (John 14:16).
 - iv) *Promise* from the Father results in outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. At His right hand, the Father affirms to the Son His promise of the Holy Spirit which finds fulfillment at Pentecost (Eph. 4:7-10).
- c) David's written witness to Jesus, vs. 34-35.
 - i) He speaks, though dead, v. 34a.
 - ii) He speaks in Psalm 110:1; vs. 34b-35.
 - d) The apostolic witness to Israel about Jesus, v. 36.
- d. God's gathering of a harvest, 2:37-47.
 - (1) The call to repentance and faith, vs. 37-40.
 - (a) The conviction that leads to repentance, v. 37.
 - (b) The call that seeks repentant faith, vs. 38-39
 - 1) It is a faith turning to Jesus Christ, v. 38.
 - 2) It is a faith turning to the promise of God, v. 39.
 - (c) The call that seeks salvation from crooked religion, v. 40.
 - (2) The consequence of faith and repentance, vs. 41-47.
 - (a) Resultant baptism, v. 41.
 - (b) Resultant apostolic oversight, v. 42.
 - (c) Resultant signs and wonders, v. 43.
 - (d) Resultant fellowship, vs. 44-45.

- 1) The constraint of faith to hold all things in common, v. 44.
 - 2) The constraint of need to share personal possessions, v. 45.
- (e) Resultant worship, vs. 46-47.
- 1) The communal breaking of bread with joy, v. 46.
 - 2) The communal praise of God with growth, v. 47.

[They were] praising [αἰνέω, aineō par panpm] God and having favor/goodwill [χάρις, charis n asf] with all the people. And the Lord was increasing/adding [προστίθημι, prostithēmi v iais] those being saved [σώζω, sōzō par ppapm] together/to their number day by day.

- B. The inaugural building of the Christian church, 3:1-7:60.
1. The first miracle of the Christian Church, 3:1-26.
 2. The first opposition to the Christian Church, 4:1-5:42.
 3. The first organization of the Christian Church, 6:1-15.
 4. The first martyr of the Christian Church, 7:1-60.