

THE BOOK OF ACTS | GOD'S REVELATION OF TRANSITION

SESSION 7: ACTS 2:14-24

ACTS 2:14-36 | PETER'S FIRST SERMON

This section begins the ministry of Peter to the Jewish nation. The full ministry of Peter is Acts 2:14-8:1.

- Verse 14 –
 - Peter, **standing up with the eleven** and speaking, presumably, as their representative, spoke to the **men of Judaea** along with those Jews from every nation who **dwell at Jerusalem** due to Messianic interest (see note on verse 5).
 - We note that Peter, following the pattern and command of Jesus, was **sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel** (Matt. 15:24).
 - His introduction shows the gravity of the message: **be this known unto you...hearken my words.**
- Verses 15-16 –
 - Peter gives a very clear response to the mockers (v. 13), and assured **the multitude** (v. 5) that they were **not drunken** but rather there had been the fulfillment of **that which was spoken by the prophet Joel**.
 - Verse 16 contains fundamental information, presented clearly: *the day of Pentecost was the fulfillment of at least a portion of Joel's prophecy.*
 - Many interpreters (including Bullinger) attempt to make **this is that** to mean **this is** kind of like **that**, but I see no way to reconcile the clarity of this language.
- Verses 17-18 –
 - Verses 17-21 are a quote from Joel 2:28-32.
 - While the nation was forgiven for their blasphemy of Jesus Christ, they cannot be forgiven of a blasphemy of the Holy Ghost (Matt 12:32). If the nation rejects the witness of the Holy Ghost, they will be destroyed. Soon we will have the first time that Jesus is being presented as the Risen King, in the power of the Spirit.
 - This is the beginning of the bona-fide Kingdom offer to the nation of Israel. Previously they had rejected their King (in ignorance), now they will have an opportunity to repent of that rejection and receive her King and His Kingdom.
- Verses 19-20 –
 - The **wonders** and **signs** of the sky are well attested in both the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures as happening at the tribulation.
 - Clearly these things had not happened at the Day of Pentecost, nor was Peter implying they had happened.
 - What Peter was doing is showing that Joel's prophecy had begun to unfold, and the nation could expect the completion.
 - It is not uncommon for prophetic literature to contain gaps of time within the same prophetic utterance.
 - These things would come to pass **before that great and notable day of the Lord come** (v. 20). The Greek word for **notable** is ἐπιφανής [epiphanes], which is also used (in different form) in 2 Thessalonians 2:8 and 1 Timothy 6:14 to speak of the coming of the Lord.

- Verse 21 –
 - Peter continues in the prophecy, in chronological order, and shows the prophetic sequence:
 - The Holy Ghost given, with accompanying manifestations
 - The signs and wonders of the heavens
 - The day of the Lord
 - The ability to **call on the name of the Lord and be saved.**
 - Note that Peter had *not* said that such a day had come. Rather, he was showing what *would soon come*, but only after the prerequisite prophecies had been fulfilled.
- Verse 22 –
 - Since Peter is speaking on the same occasion to the same men, it appears that **Ye men of Israel** and **Ye men of Judaea** (v. 14) are the same, and distinction should not be made between the Southern Kingdom (which had not existed for over 600 years) and the Northern Kingdom (which had not existed for over 750 years). The Greek word used here is *Israelite*, which would encompass all descendants of Jacob.
 - Once again, using similar words as in v. 14 (**hearken to my words**), Peter says **hear these words**, and is speaking with force that comes from unmistakable clarity.
 - Peter says that **Jesus of Nazareth** (a focus on the physical man Jesus) was **approved** (i.e.: set forth, displayed) by God with **miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him**, and the men in the audience had seen and could testify, for Peter says, **ye yourselves also know.**
 - Peter was "painting them into a corner," and they surely were beginning to get nervous.
- Verse 23 –
 - Jesus was **delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God**. This is testified by many Old Testament prophecies. Any prior Kingdom offer would not have been in good faith (i.e.: *bona fide*) since these prophecies had yet to be fulfilled.
 - Notice that it is not just the men with **wicked hands** that were being addressed, but Peter looks the men in the eye and says **ye have taken...and have crucified and slain**. These men were as guilty as Pilate, who attempted to wash his hands, but such washing was purely ritual.
- Verse 24 –
 - The truth of verse 24 is terribly problematic to these Israelites. It is bad enough to be guilty of the death of an innocent man, but now this innocent man is *alive and ascended* and being presented as *Messiah*. Such a scenario will require more than "oops!"
 - In vv. 25-31 Peter will use Hebrew Scripture to show that the resurrection of Jesus Christ was yet another prophetic fulfillment proving him to be the Messiah. Peter will return to his main subject in verse 32.