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**Ministry of the Holy Spirit**  
**Acts 2:14-41**  
**Lesson 5 – The Message of the Church**

**Acts 2:14-41 (NIV)**

<sup>14</sup> Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. <sup>15</sup> These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! <sup>16</sup> No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: <sup>17</sup> "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. <sup>18</sup> Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. <sup>19</sup> I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. <sup>20</sup> The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. <sup>21</sup> And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' <sup>22</sup> "Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. <sup>23</sup> This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. <sup>24</sup> But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. <sup>25</sup> David said about him: "I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. <sup>26</sup> Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will live in hope, <sup>27</sup> because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. <sup>28</sup> You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.'

<sup>29</sup> "Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. <sup>30</sup> But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. <sup>31</sup> Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay. <sup>32</sup> God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. <sup>33</sup> Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. <sup>34</sup> For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, "The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand <sup>35</sup> until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." <sup>36</sup> "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

<sup>37</sup> When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" <sup>38</sup> Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

<sup>39</sup> The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off--for all whom the Lord our God will call." <sup>40</sup> With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." <sup>41</sup> Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. Peter was a man who failed Jesus miserably now he is preaching and teaching the gospel. What an amazing sign of redemption. What does this tell you about God's ability to use you in spite of your past failures?
2. The sermon states that everyone has a role, responsibility and a requirement to advance the kingdom. Explain this for your life, what do you see as your personal role, responsibility and requirement to advance the kingdom?
3. The message of the Church is threefold: God, The Cross and the Resurrection.
  - a. Explain the church's message about God
  - b. Explain the church's message about the Cross
  - c. Explain the church's message about the Resurrection.
4. Does the preaching that you hear at Third Church challenge your faith in a way that produces spiritual growth? If so how, if now why?
5. How have you been changed by the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life?
6. What is the significance/importance of baptism to you?
7. Verse 41 says they gladly received his word and was baptized.
  - a. What are some of the distractions or hindrances that prevent people from gladly receiving the word and responding to it?
  - b. What can you do to ensure yourself a clear reception of the word when it is preached?
8. After listening to the sermon, share your major takeaway and why?

## B. The First Sermon (Part I): The Gospel Message, 2:14-24

(2:14-24) **Introduction:** this is the first sermon ever preached in the new church age, after Jesus' ascension and Pentecost, that is, after the coming of the Holy Spirit. If men would preach what is preached here, what a difference would exist in men's lives, in the church, and in world history. (Because of its length and the time limit placed on preachers in the churches of so many industrialized societies, the message preached by Peter is split into three studies.)

1. (2:14-16) **Holy Spirit, Infilling:** the believers were infilled. The disciples were so full of the Holy Spirit, so full of God's presence and joy, they could only...

- act excited.
- speak about the wonderful works of God (cp. Acts 2:11).
- express joy and rejoicing in what God had done.
- demonstrate absolute confidence, assurance, and conviction of God's presence and eternal salvation.
- bear testimony to all who would listen.

1. Such behavior required an explanation. It was not common behavior, not among a people who lived in a world of trial and uncertainty, struggle and survival, pain and hurt, suffering and death; a people who knew their world was such, but who evaded the fact and did all they could to escape the reality of it.

⇒ A person who demonstrated absolute confidence, assurance, and conviction of God's presence and of eternal salvation had to explain himself.

a. Some in the world were amazed at such behavior and wished to know what it meant. An answer was required (cp. Acts 2:12).

b. Others mocked, jokingly suggesting that such behavior *was crazy and foolish*, just like the behavior of a drunken man; and they, too, were due an answer (cp. Acts 2:13).

2. A spirit-filled person is not under the influence of a man-made, induced excitement. Peter stood to his feet *with the eleven* other apostles: they all stood before the thousands who had gathered (Acts 2:41). Peter spoke at the top of his voice. Note the authority and forcefulness of Peter! What a difference the Spirit had made in this man—the man who had been so *up and down* in following Jesus:

⇒ "Be this known."

⇒ "Hearken to my words."

⇒ "It is but the third hour [9 a.m.] of the day."

Peter declared that they were not deluded; they were not acting and speaking *foolish* things like a drunken man. What was happening was just what Scripture predicted. It was the work of God, just what God had promised to man. It was the glorious gospel (good news) promised by God.

**2. (2:17-21) Last Days— God, Work of:** these are the last days, the days of God's last work on earth. Standing there before the throng of thousands, Peter declared:

- ⇒ Today, this day, the great prophecy of Joel begins to be fulfilled (Joel 2:28-32).
- ⇒ Today, this day, begins the *last days* of earth's history.
- ⇒ Today, this day, begins the *last days* of God's work on earth.
- ⇒ Today, this day, begins the last days, the final age of God's plan for human history.
- ⇒ Today, this day, begins the last days, the dispensation of God's grace (the church), the age of the gospel.

**Thought 1.** In the Scripture, the "last days" mean all the above. The *last days* began when Christ came to earth and they will end when Christ returns to earth. Note: we are already 2000 years into the last days.

1. The last days include the great outpouring of God's Spirit.

a. The word "pour" (*ekcheō*<sup>PWS: 2969</sup>) means to pour out, to pour forth, to shed forth. It means that God gives His Spirit...

- to  *dwell in* the believer (John 14:17; 1 Cor. 6:19-20).
- to  *abide with* the believer forever (John 14:16).
- to fill, to overflow, to abundantly  *fill* the believer (Ephes. 5:18).
- to give very special  *manifestations* of Christ to the believer (John 14:21).

b. God pours out His Spirit upon  *all flesh*...

- upon son and daughters.
- upon young men and old men.
- upon His slaves, servants, and handmaidens.

The point is this: God's Spirit shows no discrimination. The Spirit of God is available to all: male and female, young and old, slave and free, rich and poor.

c. God pours out His Spirit with very special gifts...

- the gift of prophecy: proclaiming and predicting the truth (see Deeper Study #1—1 Cor. 14:3). Note this gift is given to both men and women. This was part of the Scriptural promise.
- the gift of seeing visions, especially among young men. The Greek word "visions" (*horaseis*<sup>PWS: 4236</sup>) means appearance (Rev. 4:3) or an ecstatic revelation (Rev. 9:17). In Scripture the Greek word is used for both what a man can envision (see, imagine, think, cause to appear) within his own mind and what is given him by God through a special revelation (Rev. 9:17).
- the gift of dreaming dreams, especially among older men. The idea is that a dream is given by God.

**Thought 1.** Note a crucial fact. History has shown and Scripture warns that spiritual gifts are often misused and abused, tragically and destructively so. (See outline—' 1 Cor. 12-14 and notes—' 1 Cor. 12-14.)

1) We must guard against accepting every dream and vision as being of God. God's Word is the revelation of God. What God wants to reveal to us is therein. We must stand upon God's Word and measure every vision and dream by God Word.

2) A study of the visions and dreams in the Book of Acts shows that everyone of them had to do with witnessing, with reaching people for Christ. Not a single dream or vision had to do with *personal edification* or with *boosting self to be spiritually superior*.

d. God pours out His Spirit only upon His servants and upon His handmaidens. This is the emphasis of this verse, the reason for repeating what has just been said. Note that the verse is a summary statement: no one receives God's Spirit, no one, not until they become His servant or His handmaiden.

e. God gifts His servants and His handmaidens with one very special gift—the gift of prophecy. Again, the point is primary, to stress what is so important. The gift of prophecy, of proclaiming that God's very own Son has come into the world to save sinners, is the primary gift of God's Spirit. Every one of God's servants and handmaidens are gifted to prophesy.

**Thought 1.** Note the devastating blow to the ego of *professionalism* and to the practice of so many of us.

1) So many of us leave proclamation, that is, witnessing, up to others, using the flimsy excuse that we are not capable nor gifted to witness.

2) Too many enjoy the prestige of a *professional gift* and a *professional ministry*, minimizing the lay ministry and the layman's gift to proclaim Christ. And although there are *measures* or degrees of gifts, the great need of the hour is for every believer to proclaim the living Lord.

The last days include the days of terrible judgment at the end—the Day of the Lord (see Deeper Study #1—Acts 2:19-20).

3. The last days include the days of great salvation. Throughout the last days, during the whole period, man can be saved by doing two simple things:

⇒ He has to *call*: to sense the *need* to be saved.

⇒ He has to call upon "the name of the Lord": to know and believe that Jesus is the Lord and to be ready to submit to His Lordship, to serve Him as Lord.

**"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:13).**

**"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:9-10).**

## **DEEPER STUDY #1 (2:19-20) Day of the Lord (Jehovah)**

(2:19-20) **Day of the Lord (Jehovah)**: in the simplest of terms, the Day of the Lord is the Day when Christ returns to execute judgment upon the earth. It is a definite Day that is coming upon earth, and note: it is coming at the end of the *last days*, at the end of the present age. (See outlines—' Matthew 24:1-25:46 and notes—' Matthew 24:1-25:46 for more discussion.) Note two points.

1. The Day of the Lord is to be characterized by several things.
  - a. Wonders (*terata*<sup>PWS: 4403</sup>): marvels, signs, happenings, portents in heaven above, that is, in outer space; happenings and marvels that point to something unusual about to happen.
  - b. Signs (*semeia*): events and happenings on earth given by God to warn that the end is at hand.
  - c. Blood and fire and vapor of smoke: terrible bloodshed and explosive fire that causes...
    - mushrooming vapors of smoke.
    - the sun to be turned into darkness and blotted out.
    - the moon to be turned into a blood red.

**Thought 1**. It is thought-provoking when we consider how closely the language resembles atomic warfare.

2. The events to happen in the Day of the Lord (as revealed by the whole of Scripture) seem to be fourfold. Note: no attempt whatsoever is made to put these events in any specific order. There are two reasons for this.

⇒ There are so many divergent opinions.

⇒ More importantly, Scripture does not give a complete list of last events.

Throughout Scripture, four events are discussed as happening in the Day of the Lord: the return of Christ, terrible tribulation, judgment, and the remaking of earth.

- a. A terrible period of tribulation (7 years). This includes the last half of the period known as the great tribulation (3 1/2 years). This is the fulfillment of Daniel's "seventieth week"
- b. The return of Christ as sovereign Lord. He shall rule and reign in glory upon earth (the Millennial reign of God's Son, Rev. 20:4-6).
- c. The resurrection and final judgment of all. This includes...
  - ⇒ men who are described as sheep and goats (Matthew 25:31-46; Rev. 20:11-15).
  - ⇒ the Beast or the antichrist, the false prophet, and their followers (Rev. 19:11-21).
  - ⇒ Satan and his angels (Rev. 20:10).
- d. The destruction and remaking of the earth and heavens (2 Peter 3:3-15; Rev. 21:1; cp. Isaiah 65:17; Isaiah 66:22).

**3. (2:22-24) Jesus Christ, Death; Resurrection:** this is the day of God's Savior, Jesus of Nazareth. Peter drove the thrust of his message home. He shouted out: "Hear these words"...

- the "last days" have been launched by Jesus of Nazareth.

1. "Jesus of Nazareth...approved of God." The word "approved" means to point out, display, show, attest, accredit, sanction, certify, endorse. God put His stamp of approval upon Jesus, demonstrating and showing to all men that Jesus is *perfectly acceptable* to Him. Jesus of Nazareth had God's *approval*, His *perfect acceptance*.

There is proof of this, the proof of His miracles and wonders and signs.

a. They were the works of God, the kind of works that only God could do. God Himself was working through Jesus of Nazareth.

b. The works were done (through Christ) "in the midst of you," in the very presence of people. They were not done in secret. God attested and demonstrated to the world that He was working through Christ. The miracles, wonders, and signs were done both *for* the sake of the world and *before* the world.

c. "You yourselves also know" this. Man knows, for God has clearly shown that Jesus is approved by Him. The evidence abounds in the lives of those who have *truly* followed Christ down through the centuries, in the presence of the living Lord who has dwelt *within* their very being.

2. The death of Jesus of Nazareth was planned by God *due to man's wickedness*

3. The resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth ended the agony of death

### **DEEPER STUDY #2 (2:23) Jesus Christ, Death**

(2:23) **Jesus Christ, Death:** this verse is saying a most significant thing. Jesus' death was planned by God *due to man's wickedness*. God planned Jesus' death, planned for Him to die upon the cross, but He planned it *because of man's wickedness*. Note two points.

1. Jesus was crucified and slain by wicked hands. Men are sinful, wicked, depraved, and selfish.

⇒ They want to go their own way.

⇒ They want to do their own thing.

⇒ They want to control their own lives.

Therefore, they rebel and fight against God, against surrendering to God, against...

- following God's way.
- doing God's thing.
- allowing God to control their lives.

It was this corruptible nature of man that rebelled against God's Son and crucified Him.

2. The "foreknowledge and determinate counsel of God" saved man. God knew man, what was in man (cp. John 2:23-24). He knew exactly what men would do to His Son. He knew they would kill His Son. But in the counsel and advice of His knowledge—in consideration of all the possibilities—God knew something else as well: the way of death, the way of the cross was the best way to save men. And being God, He was bound to choose the best way. So God determined to use the best way possible, the death of His Son to save the world.

**"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:14-16).**

**"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly" (Romans 5:6).**

**"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).**

Another way to say the same thing is that God foresaw sin even before the creation of man; so He, in love, planned beforehand that Christ should die for sinners.

**"Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world" (John 17:24).**

### **DEEPER STUDY #3 (2:23) Foreknowledge— Predestination— Determinate Counsel— Jesus Christ, Death**

**(2:23) Foreknowledge— Predestination— Determinate Counsel— Jesus Christ, Death:** the word "foreknowledge" (prognosis) means to see before; to know beforehand; to see and know the future; to foreordain.

God is God; therefore He sees the future. No matter how far a person looks into the future, God sees it. God knows...

- exactly what *will* happen, every single event and its consequences.
- exactly what *could* happen (but will not), every single possibility and its consequences.

Therefore God knows...

- exactly what man *will* do, every single act and its consequences.
- exactly what man *could* do (but will not), every single possibility and its consequences.

God is God. He is eternal and omniscient (knowing all). He knows the past, the present and the future. And note: He knows it all eternally, forever. God knew...

- every event of world history before the *foundation of the world*.
- every event of a person's life before the *foundation of the world* (cp. [Ephes. 1:4](#)).

Now in light of this, a question arises that is extremely important. If God knew all the terrible consequences of evil and death that would enter and overtake the world, if He knew the world would even kill His Son, why did He go ahead and create the world? Why did He not choose another way to do things? In the simplest terms possible, there are at least two reasons.

1. God wanted a creature, a being with free will. God created man because God willed to have the *presence* of a being who could *freely choose*...

- to love and worship Him.
- to obey and fellowship with Him.
- to serve and reign with Him.

In His foreknowledge, God knew that some would choose Him and some would reject Him. But He was willing to face...

- the pain and hurt to His heart,
- the abuse and shame to His person,
- the rejection and rebellion against His will.

God was willing to face all this in order that some might know His glorious mercy and grace and experience all the glory of Himself and heaven.

2. God did not choose another way to create and deal with man...

- because the way God created man was the best way: perfect, in a perfect environment, with free choice and will, and in perfect fellowship with God (cp. [Genesis 2:16-17](#)).
- because the way God deals with man is the best way: in love, in the mercy and grace of His Son. Love is the greatest force on earth. It is the very nature of God Himself ([1 John 4:8](#)). Love will change and transform, help and give, win and conquer when nothing else will. Love will cause a person to reach out and help another and even cause a person to sacrifice his life quicker than any other force on earth ([John 3:16](#); [John 15:13](#); [Romans 5:8](#)).

Note one other point that is critical, a point that stresses the glorious love and care of God: it is the determinate counsel of God (cp. [Acts 2:23](#)).

The word "determinate" (*hōrismenē*<sup>PWS:1007</sup>) means pre-determined, appointed, decreed, ordained, planned, purposed. It is a plan set within bounds, within a certain boundary. It is a purpose that is set, marked out, determined, decreed to happen.

The word "counsel" (*boulē*<sup>PWS:808</sup>) means to advise, counsel, design, will; to give a piece of advice. It carries the force of being willed and determined. Since God knows exactly what would happen in every situation, He plans for the best thing to happen. God takes counsel, puts all things under advisement and chooses the best way.

We may not understand some things that happen nor why they happen the way they do. We may think something else or some other way would have been better. But we must remember two things.

1. We cannot see into the future. No man can. We cannot know what would have happened if another way had been chosen. We cannot know what would have happened...

- to us.
- to others.
- to the world.

In every situation or event there are many other things that could have taken place. This is true of every situation, whether we call it *good or bad*. Think for a moment.

- ⇒ What would have taken place if the situation had been replaced by some other happening?
- ⇒ What would have taken place if another way had been chosen?
- ⇒ What and how much would be changed for the worse eventually, if not now?

We cannot know. But we can know this: God knows, for He deals with the future as well as the present. God deals with eternity, with the whole view. Therefore, another situation, another way could have changed things for the worse. Simply stated...

- God knows the future, everything that could happen as well as what is best and should happen.
- God takes counsel, purposes, determines, plans and chooses the best thing to happen.

2. We who love God and are called according to His purpose know that all things work together for good. How do we know? Because we *do* love God and *are called* according to His purpose.

God knew that we would say "Yes" to Jesus, that we would love and follow Him. Therefore, God called us.

**"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Romans 8:29).**

Note why we are predestinated. This is the key: "that he [God's Son] might be the firstborn among many brethren." God has determined that Jesus will have many brothers, many who will live and fellowship with Him as the first Person, the pre-eminent Person throughout the universe.

This is the reason God chooses the very best events and the very best way for us. It is the reason He works all things out for good for believers. God knows all the possibilities; therefore, He is able to take counsel and determine, to plan the very best for us. *Believe and trust the glorious truth.*

**"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Cor. 2:9).**

**A STUDY OF SOME SCRIPTURES DEALING WITH GOD'S FOREKNOWLEDGE AND DETERMINATE COUNSEL**

(A study giving comfort and security—God is in control.)

1. The Scripture dealing with God's foreknowledge.

a. God's foreknowledge concerns Christ.

**"Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (Acts 2:23).**

**"Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you" (1 Peter 1:20).**

b. God's foreknowledge concerns believers.

**"Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied" (1 Peter 1:2).**

(Note: These two verses actually show that God acts or predestines on the basis of His foreknowledge, of His counsel.)

c. God's foreknowledge concerns Israel.

**"God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot [know] ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel" (Romans 11:2).**

2. The Scripture dealing with God's determination. (See Master Subject Index Predestination for more discussion.)

a. God's determination concerns Christ.

**"And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!" (Luke 22:22).**

**"Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (Acts 2:23).**

b. God's determination concerns salvation and security for believers.

**"Again, he limiteth [determines, sets, appoints, plans] a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts" (Hebrews 4:7; cp. 2 Tim. 1:9; Hebrews 13:8).**

3. The Scripture dealing with God's counsel.

a. God's counsel concerns Christ.

**"Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (Acts 2:23).**

**"For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done" (Acts 4:28).**

b. God's counsel concerns believers and salvation.

**"For David, after he had served his own generation by the will [counsel] of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption" (Acts 13:36).**

c. God's counsel concerns God's plan for the world.

**"For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27).**

d. God's counsel concerns those who reject Him.

Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible - Commentary - The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible – Acts.

#### **DEEPER STUDY #4 (2:24) Jesus Christ, Resurrection**

**(2:24) Jesus Christ, Resurrection**: this is a great verse dealing with the resurrection of Christ. Note three points.

1. God raised up Christ. God knew that the very best way to save man from death was through the resurrection of His own Son from the dead
2. The resurrection of Christ "loosed the pains of death." The word "pains" (*ōdinas*<sup>PWS:2824</sup>) means birth pangs. For the unbeliever, there is great pain in death, pain such as that experienced by a woman in giving birth. But man no longer has to suffer the pain of death nor fear suffering through it. Christ has conquered and abolished death, made it completely harmless. Death is actually the most glorious and joyful experience for the believer, an experience that simply explodes human imagination.
3. It was impossible for death to hold Christ. Why? There are several significant reasons.
  - a. There was God's foreknowledge and determinate counsel. God knew that the way of the cross and resurrection was the very best way to save the world. Therefore, nothing could stop God from following through with the death and resurrection of His Son.
  - b. Jesus was approved by God. He had God's approval, sanction, accreditation, endorsement. Jesus Christ was perfectly acceptable to God
  - c. Jesus' resurrection was foretold by Scripture, and Scripture must be fulfilled (see note—' Matthew 17:23 for all the verses in the New Testament).

d. Jesus was *Life* itself. He possesses the very *being, essence, quality, substance, and energy* of life. He is *The Life, Life* itself; therefore, He is the source of all life. All life finds its source in the energy and being of Christ Himself. Therefore, being Life, death could not engulf Him any more than darkness can engulf light.

e. Jesus was sinless. Death exists or happens because everything is short of perfection—short of what it should be—short of *God's glory*. This is true of man. Man dies because he has "sinned and come short of God's glory" (Romans 3:23). Sin is...

- being short.
- missing the mark.
- transgressing God's glory.

And it is sin that causes death. Therefore Jesus Christ, being sinless, did not have to die. He died because He *willed* to die for man.

The point is this: Jesus was sinless and perfect and righteous. He was the Ideal Man, the Sinless Man, the Perfect Man—the Ideal Pattern for all other men. Therefore, when He died for men, He died as the Ideal Man or the Ideal Pattern. And death cannot hold the Ideal Man, for the Ideal Man came short in nothing. He was not short in life; therefore, He was destined to live forever. He was Perfect Life and Perfect Man. But death is anything but Life and Perfect. As the Scripture says, "It was not possible that He should be held by it [death]." (Cp. Romans 1:4.)

### **The First Sermon (Part II): Proofs of the Resurrection, 2:25-36**

(2:25-36) notes notes **Introduction**: the first sermon ever preached after Pentecost was preached by Peter. He focused on the proofs of the resurrection.

1. (2:25-28) **Jesus Christ, Work**: proof 1—the prophecy of David concerned Jesus. Peter said that "David [spoke] concerning Christ" (Psalm 16:8-11). What David said was a prophecy of the Lord's experience upon earth (Acts 2:25-28).

1. David's prophecy concerned Jesus' daily experience or life.

a. Jesus experienced God's constant presence and power.

⇒ Jesus always saw God before His face. Jesus looked and kept His gaze upon God. He thought upon God, focused His mind and attention upon God. He concentrated and stayed His mind upon Him. The idea is that Jesus always practiced and was always conscious of God's presence—"captivating every thought" (cp. 2 Cor. 10:5).

⇒ Jesus always had God on His right hand, that He should not be moved. God was right there as an advocate and as a protector and defender. God was a provider looking after Christ, strengthening, guiding, upholding, seeing that He was not moved nor shaken. The picture is that of a defender in court or of a soldier on the battlefield standing at a person's right hand, protecting, looking after, and providing for his welfare. (Cp. Psalm 109:31 for this picture.)

**"The LORD is thy keeper: the LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand" (Psalm 121:5; cp. Psalm 121:1-8).**

**"For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not: I will help thee" (Isaiah 41:13).**

b. Jesus' heart rejoiced and His tongue praised God. Such a consciousness of God's presence was bound to cause...

- the heart to rejoice (*ēphranthē*<sup>PWS: 3227</sup>): to be joyful and full of euphoria, full of God's presence and glory.
- the tongue to be glad (*ēgalliasato*<sup>PWS: 1696</sup>): to leap for joy and break forth with praise and song.

c. Jesus' flesh rested in hope. The phrase "shall rest" (*kataskēnōsei*<sup>PWS: 3278</sup>) means *shall tabernacle* or pitch a tent. Jesus' *flesh* rested, tabernacled, pitched its tent, encamped and made its abode upon hope—the hope of conquering death, of being resurrected. Hope of living forever was the basis and foundation of Jesus' life, that for which He lived. He focused His whole life and being upon the hope of the glorious resurrection (cp. Paul's testimony—Phil. 3:7-16, esp. Phil. 3:11).

. David's prophecy concerned Jesus' conviction that He could be delivered from death. Note several points.

a. The word "leave" (*egkataleipō*<sup>PWS: 2317</sup>). A soul can be utterly forsaken and abandoned, doomed permanently in hell. But Christ was absolutely sure that His soul would not be left and abandoned in hell.

b. The word "hell" (*hadēs*<sup>PWS: 1923</sup>). (See Deeper Study #1—Acts 2:27 for discussion.) Christ said emphatically that His soul would not be left in *hadēs*<sup>PWS: 1923</sup>, that is, in the realm of the dead. He would arise and live forever.

c. The word "corruption" (*diaphthoran*<sup>PWS: 806</sup>). (See Deeper Study #1—Acts 2:27 for discussion.)

d. The title Jesus used of Himself, "[God's] Holy One." Jesus was holy, righteous, and pure. He was without sin and totally devoted to God. He was perfectly acceptable to God. Therefore God was bound to raise Him, to keep His flesh from being destroyed and lying in corruption.

**"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21).**

3. David's prophecy concerned Jesus' revelation, His revealing the way of life and God's presence. The Hebrew original reads "the path of life." This is a marvelous declaration, a declaration that reveals the most glorious truth. God revealed the *path of life* to Christ, and Christ reveals it to us. The path of life, the way to escape death is to live in the countenance and presence of God. God will never abandon a man, never allow a man to see corruption if that man lives and walks in His presence.

Jesus knew the path: it was God's presence. Note: He was full of the joy of God's presence. (So should we be.)

**"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).**

**"Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Psalm 16:11).**

**DEEPER STUDY #1 (2:27) Hell (Greek, Hadēs; Hebrew, Sheol)**

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2. Proof 2: Peter's testimony (v.29-31)

2. (2:29-31) Jesus Christ, Resurrection: proof 2—Peter's testimony. Peter was forceful: the words of David could not refer to himself. David was dead and buried. It was even known where his grave was, on Mt. Zion where most of Israel's kings were buried.

But there is something significant about David. He was a prophet of God, and God had revealed to him that the Messiah would come through his line. The Messiah would be one of his descendants and sit upon his throne (Psalm 132:11; cp. Psalm 89:3-4, 35-37; 2 Samuel 7:16). Therefore, what David was doing was predicting the resurrection of Christ. The prophecy referred to Jesus and His resurrection.

Note: Peter's declaration of the prophecy. He gave the three reasons why God raised up Christ. These are the same reasons He will resurrect believers.

1. Christ was raised to reign with God.

2. Christ was raised to deliver His soul from hell (cp. Acts 2:27).

3. Christ was raised to deliver His flesh from corruption (cp. Acts 2:27). (The believer's body is to be raised from the grave and made into a new body. See note—• Matthew 22:31-32; Deeper Study #1—John 21:1; note—• 1 Cor. 15:35-49; note—• 1 Cor. 15:50-58 for discussion. Also see Resurrection—Subject Index for more discussion.)

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3. Proof 3: The eye-witnesses--the disciples (v.32)

3. (2:32) Jesus Christ, Resurrection: proof 3—the eye-witnesses to the resurrection were the disciples. (See Deeper Study #1, Jesus Christ, Resurrection—Acts 1:3 for discussion.)

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4. Proof 4: The exaltation and the ascension of Jesus into heaven (v.33-36)

a. Jesus was raised to be exalted

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4. (2:33-36) Jesus Christ, Exaltation: proof 4—the exaltation and the ascension of Jesus into heaven. Note three points. (See note, Jesus Christ, Ascension—•Acts 1:9 for more discussion.)

1. Jesus was raised to be exalted. His resurrection involved the exaltation.

⇒ To be raised is for the purpose of exaltation.

⇒ To be raised is being exalted to the very presence of God.

⇒ To be raised and given eternal life is a state of exaltation.

⇒ To be raised means to be exalted.

Note the words "the right hand of God." This is a position by the side of God, a place of honor, glory, authority, dominion, and rulership (cp. Acts 5:31). Christ has been raised to sit by the right hand of God in such a position. And note: Christ, who is the obedient Son of God and the exalted Lord, has received what God had promised Him, the Holy Spirit. The exalted Christ has the presence of God, the Holy Spirit, to shed forth (execute, pour forth) upon us all. This is what "you now see and hear," the glorious presence and energy of the Holy Spirit, of

the very Spirit and presence of God Himself. (Cp. John 15:26; John 16:7.)

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Thought 1. The believer's heart should shout "hallelujah, praise ye the Lord." Christ has sent the great promise and gift of the Spirit!

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b. David prophesied the Lord's exaltation

2. David prophesied the Lord's exaltation (cp. Psalm 110:1). David could not have been speaking of himself, for he never arose from the dead, nor has he ever been exalted. David was prophesying that God (Jehovah) had spoken to David's Lord (Messiah), promising that the Lord would sit on God's right hand. And the Lord would reign until God subjected all the Lord's foes. The picture of the footstool is that of complete triumph and victory over all the enemies of Christ, both human and spiritual.

c. Jesus was made both Lord and Messiah

3. Peter declared emphatically: Jesus is both Lord and Messiah. "Let all...know assuredly" (asphalōs PWS: 223). The word is emphatic. It means without any doubt whatsoever, with perfect assurance and certainty. Know that...

- Jesus is Lord (Acts 2:33).
- Jesus is Messiah (see Deeper Study #2—Matthew 1:18).
- Jesus whom ye crucified (see Deeper Study #2, Jesus Christ, Death—Acts 2:23 for discussion).

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**DEEPER STUDY #1**

(2:27) Hell (Greek, *Hadēs*; Hebrew, *Sheol*): the Greek word used here is *Hadēs*. Jesus revealed that Hades is the other world, that is, the unseen world, the spiritual dimension of being (see Deeper Study #3—Luke 16:23). Jesus said that Hades (the other world) was divided into two huge areas or sections. The two areas are separated by a great gulf that is impassable (Luke 16:26). One area is the place of sorrow (Luke 16:23-24, 28), and the other area is the place of paradise where believers go. To say that one is dead is to say that one is in hades or in the other world.

Note a critical fact: the other world or the spiritual dimension of being does exist. Denying hell does not change the fact that hades exists. There are two areas or places in the other world: paradise and hell—the place of glory and the place of torment. And Christ says both actually exist.

The context of what Jesus said in David's prophecy needs to be noted.

1. The word "leave" (*egkatalēipō*) means to leave behind, to utterly forsake and abandon. It is a strong word indicating a permanent state. A soul can be utterly forsaken and abandoned and doomed permanently in hell.
2. The word "corruption" (*diaphthoran* <sup>PWS: 806</sup>) means to decay, deteriorate, putrify, destroy, perish. In no place does Christ promise a *new body* to the unbeliever, to the unsaved and lost. A person's body and flesh can be destroyed forever. (This is a fact seldom pointed out.)

**"For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Galatians 6:8).**

## DEEPER STUDY #2

(2:36) **Lord** (Greek, *Kurion*; Hebrew *Adonai*): the Greek word for Lord is used to refer to men such as rulers and to the Lord Jesus Christ. (See Deeper Study #1—Phil. 2:11 for more discussion.) In reference to the resurrected and exalted Christ, it means:

- ⇒ "Jesus our Lord" (2 Peter 1:2).
- ⇒ "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28).
- ⇒ "Both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36).
- ⇒ "The Lord of all" (Acts 10:36).
- ⇒ "The Lord of glory" (1 Cor. 2:8; James 2:1).
- ⇒ "The Lord of lords" (Rev. 17:14).
- ⇒ "The Lord our God" (Rev. 19:1).
- ⇒ "The Lord God [Theos, Jehovah]" (1 Peter 3:15; cp. Isaiah 8:13).
- ⇒ "The Lord thy God" (Matthew 4:7; Luke 4:12).
- ⇒ "The Lord [Jehovah]" (1 Peter 2:3; cp. Psalm 34:8; Mark 1:2-3; cp. Isaiah 40:3; Malachi 3:1).
- ⇒ "Lord Jesus" (Acts 7:59; Acts 8:16; Acts 9:29; 2 Cor. 1:14; 2 Thes. 1:7; Hebrews 13:20; Rev. 22:20).
- ⇒ "Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11).
- ⇒ "The Son of Man is Lord" (Mark 2:28).
- ⇒ "The Lord of David" (Mark 12:35-37).
- ⇒ "The [Lord] master of the house" (Mark 13:35).

1. The Lord Jesus Christ is seen as the *resurrected and exalted* Son who sits at the right hand of the Father (Jehovah). He sits in the exalted position of glory and majesty, dominion and power, praise and honor. He rules over all.

2. The Lord Jesus Christ is also seen as the sovereign Majesty of the Universe, the Supreme Being who possesses the very nature of God (Jehovah, YHWH Himself). As the Son of God He is just like God in Being, nature, essence, and character—perfect God in every respect. Therefore, He can be addressed as *the Lord* God, Jehovah or YHWH because He is God

### The First Sermon (Part III): Imperatives of Salvation, 2:37-40

(2:37-40) **Introduction:** this passage makes it crystal clear what a person must do to be saved. It gives us "The Imperatives of Salvation."

1. (2:37) **Conviction:** the people were convicted and they cried out, "What shall we do?" Peter's sermon, the proclaimed Word, was driven home to the hearts of the people.

The word "pricked" (*katenugēsan*<sup>PWS:3038</sup>) means to convict, sting, sense pain and hurt.

Conviction is an emotional movement of the heart. A person senses sorrow over disappointing God. The person's heart is touched and moved to some degree of brokenness. (See Deeper Study #1, Godly Sorrow—2 Cor. 7:10 for more discussion.) Conviction is being pricked with a tug, a pull, a knowledge, an awareness.

- ⇒ It is a sense of sin, of doing wrong, of breaking God's law, of being disobedient.
- ⇒ It is a sense of failure, of coming short, of not measuring up, of disappointing God.
- ⇒ It is a sense of needing more and more of the Lord and His righteousness.

Conviction causes people to seek answers, to ask, "What shall we do?"

2. (2:38) **Salvation**: the imperatives are twofold. A person must repent and be baptized.

### **DEEPER STUDY #1 (2:38) Baptism**

3. (2:38) **Salvation**: the results are twofold, being forgiven of sins and receiving the Holy Spirit.

1. Forgiveness of sins
2. Receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit

### **DEEPER STUDY #2 (2:38) Remission— Forgiveness (*aphesin*)**

4. (2:39) **Salvation— Assurance of**: the assurance to all is God's promise. Note the promise is...

- "to you": the Jews.
- "to all that are afar off": the Gentiles; any who are away in distant lands; any who are spiritually away from God, no matter how far away.

But note the condition, the one essential. The promise is assured to those whom "the Lord our God shall call." (See Deeper Study #3, Call—Acts 2:39.)

### **DEEPER STUDY #3 (2:39) Shall Call (*an proskalesetai*)**

5. (2:40) **Salvation— Separation**: the great cry of Peter, "Save yourselves from this untoward [corrupt] generation."

1. The words "save yourselves" (*sothete*) mean that a person is to act and do exactly what Peter preached: "Repent and be baptized."
2. "Untoward" (*skolias* <sup>PWS:4179</sup>) means crooked or bent out of shape. Men are far from being straight and in the shape intended by God. They are crooked and bent, unrighteous and ungodly, sinful and corrupt.

**"And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation" (Acts 2:40).**

**"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. 6:17-18).**

### DEEPER STUDY #1

(2:38) **Baptism**: is the outward sign, the immediate sign of repentance. It is the physical sign that a person is identifying with Christ. It is the immediate sign that a person is to show before the world that he is really repenting and is now going to obey and live for God. Baptism and repentance are both...

- outward signs.
- signs that have to do with behavior.
- signs that show the world that a person is turning his life over to God.

Repentance is a command to change one's life. Baptism is a command, the very first command to follow Christ. Baptism is the first command given to those who are repenting. The person who is really repenting must be baptized. He must give testimony to the world and confess to the world that he is repenting by being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ (cp. Matthew 28:19-20). Baptism is not an option. It is as much a command as repentance.

**"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19).**

Now, note a critical point that is often overlooked and neglected. Just because a person changes his life (repents) and is baptized does not mean he is saved. A person can change his life by the power of his own will, by discipline and self-control, by his own effort and works. And he can very simply request to be baptized. Many people have and will continue to do this. Many live what society calls a good, upright, and moral life and they have been baptized. But there is more to being saved than merely changing one's life and being baptized. What is it? It is the very basis, the very essential to true salvation, to being truly forgiven and receiving the Holy Spirit:

⇒ It is the essential of faith, of believing "in the name of Jesus Christ."

A person who truly believes and really trusts Jesus does repent and is baptized. But just because a person lives a disciplined and controlled life (repents) and has been baptized does not mean he is truthfully trusting Jesus as his Savior. True faith—the inward work within the heart, the inward work of really believing *in the name of the Lord Jesus*—is the one absolute essential for being saved.

Now note another critical point that is also overlooked and neglected.

⇒ Just because a person says he believes in Jesus does not mean he is saved. A person can say and claim anything, and that person can be baptized. But profession and baptism do not save a person anymore than a changed life and baptism save a person.

There is more to being saved than professing faith and being baptized. What is it? Again, it is the very basis, the very essential to true salvation, to being truly forgiven and receiving the Holy Spirit.

⇒ It is the basis, the essential of *repenting* and of doing the very first act of repentance, being baptized.

There is no faith *without true repentance* and there is no forgiveness by God *without trusting or committing* one's life to God's dear Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. And the very first act of following Jesus is that of repenting and being baptized. A person who honestly believes in Jesus Christ will do what He said, repent and be baptized.

This is what Peter was saying in this passage. He did not mention faith, but he was not omitting faith nor eliminating belief in the Lord Jesus as essential to salvation. The rest of Scripture cannot be ignored in looking at this verse just as this verse and others like it cannot be ignored by the passages that stress faith alone. Common sense tells us that a person who truly believes something acts upon that thing. *Behavior follows true belief*. But similarly, common sense tells us that behavior can be changed by raw effort and discipline. A person can change because he thinks he should change and not because someone else demands change.

Paul stressed the same point in that classic passage of his (Romans 6:3-4), and the point is very significant. A believer (true believer) is said to be "baptized [immersed] into the death of Christ."

**"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized [immersed] into the death of Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:3-4).**

Now note what Paul has just said: when a person is baptized, he is "baptized into His [Jesus'] death" in the same way he is immersed (identified) into the resurrection of Christ. Baptism is an act by which one identifies with Christ. He counts himself as having died *in* Christ's death and as having risen *in* Christ's resurrection; as living and moving and having his being *in* Christ even as Christ lived and moved and had His being in God. Christ's death and resurrection and life becomes the believer's death and resurrection and life. The believer treats and judges himself as having been "crucified with Christ, nevertheless living; yet not himself, but Christ living in him"

In conclusion, history has shown that this point needs to be stressed and restressed.

⇒ A person can repent, change his own life and be baptized (by his own effort and works) without ever trusting Christ, without really believing in Christ.

⇒ But a person cannot trust, cannot really believe in Christ without repenting and following Christ in the very first act of repentance, that of being baptized. True faith and honest belief always mean that a person repents and is baptized. To believe is to follow (obey) Christ and to be baptized.

**"And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:9. See Deeper Study #2—John 2:24.)**

**"He that believeth not [ho apeithon, obeys not] shall not see life" (John 3:36).**

## **DEEPER STUDY #2**

(2:38) **Remission—Forgiveness** (*aphesin*): to send off, to send away. The wrong is cut out, sent off, sent away from the wrongdoer. The sin is separated from the sinner.

There are four main ideas in the Biblical concept of forgiveness.

1. There is the idea of why forgiveness is needed. Forgiveness is needed because of wrong doing and guilt and the penalty arising from both.

**"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).**

**"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23).**

2. There is the idea of a *once-for-all* forgiveness, a total forgiveness. A man is forgiven *once-for-all* when he receives Jesus Christ as his Savior. Belief in Jesus Christ, true repentance, is the only condition for being forgiven *once-for-all*.

**"For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28).**

**"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Ephes. 1:7).**

3. There is the idea of forgiveness that maintains fellowship. Fellowship exists between God as Father and the believer as His child. When the child does wrong, the fellowship is disturbed and broken. The condition for restoring the fellowship is confessing and forsaking the sin (Psalm 66:18; Prov. 28:13; 1 John 1:7).

**"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).**

4. There is the idea of a *releasing from guilt*. This is one of the differences between a man forgiving another man and God forgiving a man. A man may forgive a person for wronging him, but he can never remove the guilt that his friend feels. And often he cannot remove the resentment he himself feels within his own heart. Only God can remove the guilt and assure the removal of resentment. God does both. God forgives and erases the guilt and resentment (Psalm 51:2, 7-12; Psalm 103:12; 1 John 1:9).

**"I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins" (Isaiah 43:25).**

**DEEPER STUDY #3**

(2:39) **Shall Call** (*an proskalesētai*<sup>PWS:471</sup>): God has to call because man is dead to God and resists the gospel. Man's deadness and resistance are seen in the very word *call*. The word *call* has both the idea of initiative and deadness and of constraint and resistance. For example, the calling of a person to simply come involves both actions...

- of pulling him to come.
- of being dead (unaware and not knowing or resisting the fact that one was to come).

Man, self-centered and rebellious toward God, likes to feel independent. Consequently, man is dead to God and resistant to the pulling call and quickening power of God.

The person who comes to Christ is a person who has been called by God, a person who has experienced the divine initiative. A man...

- does not act alone and come to Christ.
- does not come by his own effort and energy.
- does not come by his own works.
- does not come by his own mind, thoughts, and will.
- does not come by his own labor and good deeds.

A man, a dead spirit, can do nothing spiritually just as a dead body can do nothing physically. If a man with a dead spirit is to come to Christ, he has to be *acted upon* and *drawn* by God. Both God and man have a part in salvation.

⇒ God calls and He attracts, draws, pulls, and tugs at the heart of man to come.

Now note: when a man senses the call and pull of God, he must act then and there. He must believe and make the decision to follow Christ, even if he is all alone in the depths of a jungle someplace. Why? Because God's Spirit does not always strive or tug at us. We all know this. We have all felt the call of God before—the tug and movement of His Spirit within our hearts. But we quenched the tug and movement. We rejected the call, and the Spirit of God left us. And the more we reject the tug and call, the less often it comes.

⇒ We *quench* the Spirit.

**"Quench not the Spirit" (1 Thes. 5:19).**

⇒ The Spirit does not always strive with us.

**"And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man" (Genesis 6:3).**

Therefore, when the call of the Lord our God comes, we must *believe* and "repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 2:38). (See note—' [John 6:44-46](#); note—' [John 6:65](#) for more discussion.)

**"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).**

**"Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage" (Matthew 22:9).**

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