



ACM BIBLE STUDIES

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

The Record of the Beginning of Jesus' Reign

Chapter Two

INTRODUCTION

NOTE: In this lesson, we will cover the events of the Day of Pentecost in Jerusalem just after Christ ascended his throne. The importance and implications of this chapter have been generally overlooked or ignored. And, of course, the Charismatic movement has misconstrued and confused its meaning. However, correctly understood, it is a foundation piece in the true history of the Reign of Christ ... and the history of New Jerusalem.

QUESTION: Isn't an "ecstatic seizure" evidence of God dwelling within your body via possession of The Holy Ghost?

WE LEARNED, in Chapter One, that *Acts* is a record of the beginning of the reign of Jesus. This record includes much of what He accomplished through the works of His appointed apostles and disciples. We could call this book *The Early History and Accomplishments of Christ's Reign*.

Unfortunately, the true story of *Acts* has been covered up and replaced by myths and fables popularized by the churches and those who refuse to accept the Reign of Christ. The churches have redefined Jesus' Kingship to make it seem meaningless. Churchgoers generally perceive scripture as mysterious and unexplainable – as witnessed in the modern Charismatic movement and its mysterious interpretation of *Acts Two*.

This chapter is not about "spirit possession" and "magic." *Acts* is a record of how Christ affected men and redirected their thinking and their loyalties. Because of Christ's powerful influence, men's spirits changed from seeking idols to seeking truth; from preferring sin to preferring freedom; from seeking man's system to seeking God's system.

The years covered in the book of *Acts* saw many displays of God's power. Those events, and the effect they had on succeeding ages, are unique in the course of history. Jesus was murdered by a corrupt conspiracy of religious/political Judeans – not unlike the rulers of our age. God raised Jesus from the dead and placed Him on David's Throne over New Jerusalem. It was not the first time the dead had been raised – but, **IT WAS THE FIRST TIME ANYONE HAD BEEN RAISED TO IMMORTALITY!** Jesus was given a position that no man had ever before occupied.

Jesus was established as King, and He oversees the affairs of men. History, since then, has been shaped by Him.

Chapters One and Two equip us to understand Christ's present-day reign. These chapters tell us about the risen Jesus and His apostles ... among whom He moved and taught for approximately forty days after He was raised up. Just think ... they had forty days of personal communication with the resurrected, immortal Jesus. That must have been quite an experience!

Toward the end of those forty days, Jesus was taken from their sight. Then came the day of Pentecost – approximately ten days later – when the apostles, and others in the area of Jerusalem, received holy inspiration (holy spirit). Thus, we see the results of Jesus' first acts from the Throne of His Reign (also known as "the throne of David").

JUDGMENT

(DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM AND ROME)

In 29 AD in Jerusalem, the Jews had religious and political authority under Roman rule. Rome ruled over the Jews and the entire “civilized world.”

To the Romans, Jesus was just another citizen to serve their system. But, they had no idea of who Jesus really was and what He had in store for them. Not only did He expose the evils of man’s system, both in Rome and Jerusalem – He defied them. Thus, they murdered Him. But, God raised Him up.

Jesus was raised and given authority over all creation. The raised, glorified Jesus demonstrated His authority by causing the destruction of the Jewish state in 70 AD, as well as the overthrow of Rome in the fifth century.

Rome’s fall came at the hands of so-called “Barbarians” as they were called by the so-called “civilized” Romans of the time. But, interestingly, these so-called “Barbarians” who sacked Rome were some of Europe’s

Semitic descendants of Israel. They were called Vandals, Gauls, Goths and Visigoths. They were mostly Semitic, as were the Romans. But, the Romans called them “Barbarians” ... by which they meant that they were non-Roman. And, since these “Barbarians” were fierce fighters, the Romans’ label of “Barbarian” acquired a sinister “savage” connotation ... which it still carries today.

These so-called “Barbarians” were certainly not primitive savages. They were educated, trained, organized warriors. Their culture was foreign to the Romans, and, indeed, inimical to it. But, the point is that King Jesus used these “barbaric” Israelite cousins to bring judgment upon the Roman Empire. For those who have eyes to see the kingdom of God, and its King (Jesus), the fall of Rome is evidence of the King’s presence.

ACTS 2:1 PENTECOST

And in the course of the day of Pentecost, they (the disciples) were all together in one place.

“PENTECOST” is a form of the Greek word that means “fifty.” It referred to a contemporary Jewish holiday that occurred fifty days after their festival of First Fruits ... in the spring of the year. The Jewish calendar,

and its schedule of festivals, was based on the Babylonian lunar calendar, not the Israel solar calendar. The Jewish Feast of Pentecost was not the same as the old Hebrew feast of the same name back at the time of Moses. The 1st-century Judeans, not unlike modern churchgoers, borrowed scriptures and terms from the Old Testament and applied them to rituals and concepts brought with them from Babylon. Their feast of “Pentecost” was a Babylonian im-

port masquerading as the old Israel feast.

During the festival, in 29 AD, the disciples were in Jerusalem – not in honor of the Babylonian feast, but because it was an opportunity to make contact with brethren and give them the good news of Christ’s Reign.

In verse two, the disciples and friends who were together in one place, were about to witness a great display of power from their new King.

ACTS 2: 2-4 INSPIRATION AND DIALECTS

And suddenly there came a noise out of the heaven as of rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.

And there appeared to them languages, spreading as fire; and it came upon each of them.

And they were all filled with special inspiration and began to speak with other languages as they were inspired to speak.

“FILLED with holy spirit” means “filled with inspiration to be separate.” The churches wrongly interpret “the holy spirit” as a living ghostlike being. They also define “tongues” as ecstatic seizures and verbal blubbing.

These theories present a colorful picture, but the scripture simply does not say that. It says “*languages appeared to them*” – which means they either spoke or heard in dialects that weren’t their own. The word “cloven” (KJV) comes from a Greek word meaning “dividing,” “dispersing” or “distributing.” And, since we’re speaking of fire, we understand it to mean “distributing and spreading.”

So, it should read "... spreading, like fire ..." – that is, in the sense of spreading to others nearby, as a flame spreads to the objects nearby.

The scene was unique and amazing. Certain people were receiving inspiration and gifts of

tongues (languages). One would suddenly gain the ability to speak or hear in a dialect that was foreign to him, and then another would do the same ... and this gift of "tongues" spread to several who were present that day.

This phenomenon was heretofore unknown to them. Peter, a little later, would define it as the fulfillment of prophecy. To us, looking back, we see it as a primary act manifesting the superintending Presence and Reign of Christ.

ACTS 2: 5-13: INSPIRATION SPREADS FURTHER

And in Jerusalem there were resident Judeans, ardent men, out of every nation under the heaven.

And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together and was confused, because each one heard them speaking in his own dialect.

And they (the hearers) were beside themselves and were wondering, saying, Look, are not all these which speak Galileans?

And how are we hearing each in our own dialect, wherein we were born?

Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the

dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia,

Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Judeans and proselytes,

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

And they were beside themselves, and were perplexed, saying one to another, What is this?

Others were mocking saying, "These men are full of new wine."

UP to this point, we have been reading about the small group of disciples in the upper room. But, in verse five, more people come into the picture. It says that there were people residing in Jerusalem who had come from other nations. There were foreigners visiting Jerusalem for the feast. Some of the nationalities are listed.

Jerusalem was an international city. It had both visitors, and residents, from various nations around the Mediterranean. These were "Judeans" of various backgrounds.

The feature that these "Judeans" had in common was their religion. That culture was centered in, and inextricably tied to, Jerusalem. Thus they were called "Judeans."

Just as the Moslems look to Mecca (the central feature of their culture), from where they receive their common identity as Moslems,

so the Judeans looked to Jerusalem (the central feature of their religion) from where they received their common identity as "Judeans."

Jerusalem was in Judea. "Judea" was a Roman province.

"Judeans" were people who identified with that province, its culture, AND Jerusalem, the central feature of the province and its culture. Thus, the term "Judean" re-

ferred to a culture. It had no specific racial connotation.

Verses 7-11 tell us they were religious "Judeans" from various lands. And, an interesting thing was beginning to happen. The churches, today, tell us this scene

was an early prototype of the modern-day Charismatic Churches. If you've never seen a Pentecostal or Charismatic revival meeting, then it may challenge your imagination to envision it.

They moan and sputter, and make fearful sounds. Soon, they are shaking, gyrating, slobbering, stumbling, shouting and mumbling strange sounds and unintelligible babble.

They make tremendous fools of themselves.

In essence, it is an initiation rite which catalyzes them into the brotherhood of ecstasies. They call it "speaking in tongues," or "glossolalia (the Greek word for "lan-

QUESTION: By belittling the modern Charismatic "tongues" experience, is it possible that we are trying to limit God's powers?

guages”). Once initiated through “tongues,” the joiner is locked in. Rarely does he escape. His pride prevents it. The stark embarrassment of having willingly acted the part of a fool is too much for him to admit. Instead, he prefers to defend his indiscretions by declaring them legitimate.

It is subtle and compelling to some. The lure of this “Charismatic experience” has fostered the fastest growing segment of modern Judeo-Christianity.

But, this was not what happened in Acts 2! The pouring out of holy spirit was no ecstatic babble fest. It was not a stage production. It was genuine. There, in that upper room, the disciples suddenly were enabled to speak or hear in dialects of other nations. It was not “angel jargon,” “occult gibberish,” or “hypnotic chanting.” It was foreign dialects.

When the disciples left the room, people gathered around to see what was happening. Everyone was surprised and curious – including the disciples. The foreign visitors heard them in their own national dialects!

There is a great difference between the miracle of that day ... and the sham that occurs in the ostentatious “Tongues” churches of today.

In Acts 2, God gave the people ability to speak or hear in the languages of foreigners who were there in Jerusalem. Those dialects were viable languages of the visitors and the residents who had immigrated there earlier. By this miracle, the gospel went out to Israelites living in lands outside Judea.

Israelites in Jerusalem received the gospel from the disciples firsthand. The disciples, with their

new-found lingual abilities, spoke of the wonders of the Kingdom. And, the varied peoples understood the words of the disciples, and were yet shocked at the miracle.

The men who spoke were known to be Galileans, and yet the foreigners were hearing the message in their own dialects.

They asked, “What is this?” Others present who did not recognize the foreign dialects began mocking the disciples, insinuating that they were drunken babblers.

QUESTION: How can a person know if he has the holy spirit if he can't “feel” it by means of going into an ecstatic trance?

ACTS 2:14-21 PETER'S ANSWER: JOEL'S PROPHECY

But Peter, together with the eleven, stood and lifted up his voice and proclaimed to them, “Men, Judeans, and all Jerusalem residents, let this be known to you, and hear what I say:

For, contrary to your assumption, these are not drunk, for it is but the third hour of the day (appx. 9 AM).

“Rather, this is the thing spoken through the prophet Joel;

“And it will occur in the last days, says God, I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your elders shall dream dreams:

“And on my male servants and on my female servants, in those days, I will pour out my spirit; and they shall prophesy:

““And I will give indications in the heaven above, and proofs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and cloud of smoke:

“The sun shall be transformed into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that coming great and notable day of the Lord:

“And if anyone calls upon the name of the Lord he will be saved.”

IN the manner of a prophet, Peter stood and explained what was happening.

With Peter's description, this event was brought into focus. God had planned this! It was the raising of New Jerusalem

Peter spoke of an 800-year-old prophecy from Joel 2 where we find this prophecy ... along with another one predicting the destruction of Jerusalem.

28. And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:

Joel 2: 28-32

Note the word “afterward.” Peter's quote in the KJV was rendered: “... *in the last days.*” However, the original Hebrew quote reads: “... *afterward*” – the better translation. “Afterward” does not mean “at the end of time.” It simply means “some time later.”

Thus, Peter used the Greek idiom “in latter days” to mean “later on” or, “afterward.” Unfortunately, churches have misinterpreted this idiom to mean “the end of the world.”

Churchgoers tend to futurize all prophecy. When reading the phrase, “in the last days,” they surmise that Peter was talking about a future “end” of all things. It has become a favorite phrase of preachers and churchgoers. Nonetheless, “the end of time” is not a real Bible concept.

Agnes end ... but time doesn't. Preachers like to refer to “the end” as if it were an inevitable date on the calendar that is inexorably approaching. It's as if “the final end” is like a cliff, and we are all on a one-way train heading for that cliff. Thus, it would seem that it is just a matter of time before we all plunge over this predetermined “end.”

Churchgoers assume that God plans to end his creation. And yet, the Bible says that God created the earth to be “... inhabited” and “... not in vain,” (Isaiah 45:18) Therefore, “the end of the world” is a phrase borrowed from non-Biblical sources.

God has no “end of time” planned for His creation! Eons may end, but God's creation will endure beyond man's speculations.

Joel continues to paint a mental picture of Jerusalem's end, not the world's end. While Jerusalem burns, the Lord pours His spirit upon His “remnant.”

29. And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.

30. And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.

31. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come.

32. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of

the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call.

Joel gave a more detailed account of Jerusalem's destruction earlier in the same chapter:

1. Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord comes, for it is nigh at hand;

2. A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great and strong people; there has never the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations.

These verses predicted a cataclysmic event to come upon the land of “Zion” and “his holy mountain, Jerusalem.” This event occurred in 70 AD. The invaders were the Roman armies (“a great and strong people ...”).

10. The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining:

“DAY OF THE LORD”

In 70 A.D., “the day of the Lord” came upon Jerusalem. “Day of the Lord” is an idiom meaning “a judgment from the Lord.” It is “a” judgment. Not necessarily “the” judgment. It can refer to ANY judgment from the Lord - at any time.

The judgment that fell upon Jerusalem, in 70 A.D., was prophesied by Joel. That judgment pretty well destroyed Jerusalem at that time.

11. And the Lord shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp is very great: for he is strong that executes his word: for the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; and who can abide it? (Joel 2:1, 2, 10, 11)

In Joel's day, there were Israelites in Jerusalem who would become Christians. There were also “Jews” of non-Israelite extraction ... racially-mixed people. Jerusalem was called “Zion” because of its historical significance.

Joel foresaw a destruction. And, in verses 12 through 27, he predicted that some Israelites in Jerusalem would actually repent and turn to Christ. Joel prophesied that God would bless them.

Joel's prophecy was finished in 70 AD when Jerusalem received her judgment. The called-out ones (the remnant) followed Christ away from Jerusalem, out into the nations where they were delivered (saved) from that judgment that fell upon Jerusalem.

As you read Joel's description, try to visualize what it might have been like there in Jerusalem as it was being sacked and burned. Try to imagine the scene: smoke-filled air - so thick that it dimmed the sun. At times, you could get a glimpse of the moon - reddish in color because of the smoke filtering its light. If you've ever been in or near a large fire, you can understand how the moon appears to turn red (or “turn into blood”) when you look at it through the smoke.

QUESTION: What about “The Final Judgment Day,” and “The End of This World” ... when Christ returns and the old Earth is destroyed?

ACTS 2:22 SIGNS AND PROOFS

Men, Israelites, hear these words. Jesus the Nazarene, a man approved of God among you by mighty works and signs and proofs, which God DID through Him in the midst of you, as you yourselves know:

THIS was the unfolding picture. It was the consummation: the manifestation of Christ's Reign. This was Jesus taking His rightful position as Husband over New Jerusalem. Peter was laying it out for those with ears to hear and eyes to see.

First, Peter reminded them that the pouring out of the spirit of God had been prophesied; that God would show signs and proofs, including the destruction of Jerusalem. And, the signs and the proofs were occurring right there, at that particular time, before them.

Peter said that one of the signs was God pouring His spirit upon them.

It began happening that very day with the people miraculously speaking or hearing in foreign tongues. But, "tongues" was only one miracle accompanying this outpouring. The "signs of the times" (still relegated to the distant future by today's churches) were actually taking place there, in the first century! And, we see, in verses 17, 19, and 22, proofs of Christ's reign.

All of these prophesied wonders and signs were happening,

and had been happening. Many were happening between 30 and 70 A.D..

Then, Jerusalem fell. The record is there for anyone to see. Nonetheless, modern churchgoers continue to submit themselves to false prophets to be brainwashed to look to Jerusalem with its anti-Christ "Jews" as the "holy land."

QUESTION: If Christ's kingdom exists right now, won't it have to be cleansed from all the moral filth and corruption before it can work? In other words, won't the imperfect present world have to "end" and a new world begin?

ACTS 2:23 & 37 ISRAELITES ALSO BLAMED FOR CHRIST'S DEATH:

This man (Jesus), by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, having been delivered through the hand of the lawless, you took and crucified:

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

THE "you" in this verse, who took Jesus and crucified Him, included Israelites. Peter identified them expressly in verse 22. Thus, Peter includes Israelites with those who took and crucified Jesus.

There has been a tendency, among Christians who have learned the difference between Jews and Israelites, to try to put full blame for Christ's murder on non-Israelite Jews. No matter how guilty or how bloody the hands of the Jews were at that time, there were Israelites as well who were guilty of His blood – as Peter said: "Men, Israelites" . . . "you have taken, and crucified the Christ."

Also, in verse 37 we find another reference to Israelites acknowledging their guilt.

When the called-out Israelites heard Peter's sermon, their consciences were "pierced" – and they asked what they must do to address their guilt. In order for this statement to make sense, those Israelites had to be guilty of the blood of Christ. Otherwise, Peter's sermon would not have "pierced" their consciences.

QUESTION: How can we blame God's own Israelite people for Jesus' death when the Bible clearly tells how the anti-Christ Jew Caiaphas (and his conspirator colleagues) plotted to unlawfully accuse and murder Jesus?

ACTS 2:24 JESUS IS NOT YAHWEH

Whom God has raised up having released the pangs of death: because it was not possible that He should be held by it

NOTICE that Jesus didn't raise Himself up, as some theologians claim. Jesus had been dead. The dead cannot raise themselves. It was His Father who raised Him up. This verse clearly shows that the Son is dependant upon the Father.

Also, looking ahead to verses 31-32, we see further confirmation of this.

31. Having foreseen this, he (David) spoke of the raising up of Christ; that neither was He (Christ) forsaken into hades, nor did His flesh decay.

The KJV improperly renders the phrase in this verse as "his soul was not left in hell." The correct

rendering is: "neither was He forsaken into hades (death)." Jesus was not FORSAKEN into death.

Notice ... this prophecy, or statement, implies someone had the option of "forsaking" Jesus. Who had that option? If Jesus was Yahweh (as many churches claim), He could not have died, nor could anyone forsake Him.

Yahweh, by His very nature, as well as His name (Yahweh is "He Who Exists") cannot die! Indeed, if He somehow were to divest Himself of His character and essence, and become mortal and actually die, then He could no longer be "Yahweh"! Neither could He return to His former state. To be Yahweh, He must exist unceas-

ingly. Otherwise, He could not be "Yahweh" and would be relegated to the ranks of other "gods" who die.

Yahweh CANNOT die. If Yahweh had the option to forsake Jesus, then this scripture absolutely establishes the dependency of Jesus upon His Father. Thus, they are not equal. Jesus was rescued out of death. His life had been lost – it ceased to be – and then He was rescued from death by One greater than He. That's what the scripture says. He was raised up by the Father – as Peter states in the next verse:

32. God raised this Jesus up, of which we are all witnesses.

This is straight forward. But the churches would have us believe Yahweh resorted to mystery and confusion.

QUESTION:

If God can do anything He wants, isn't it possible that He became flesh and died – in the form of Jesus – and then brought Himself back to life?

ANSWER:

In order for people to accept the theory that Yahweh "died," they must change the basic definitions of the words "death" and "die."

"Death" is cessation of life. It is not the continuation of life in an altered state of being. It is not an "immortal spirit" shedding its shell or "envelope" of flesh. It is not the flesh dying, but a living "spirit" remaining.

Those who say that the Creator died are redefining "death" to correspond to their theories. To claim that God died, and then raised Himself up again, is to say that He didn't fully die; that "death" is only an altered state of life – a state from which one can reclaim himself.

Life generates from life. It cannot generate from "nothing." "Nothing" generates nothing. In actual death there is no ability or life to regenerate itself.

"For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything," (Ecc. 9:5)

"Death" is not by degree – it is all or nothing. Like the word "stop," "death" indicates a cessation. "Stop" does not mean "slow," and "death" does not mean "change form but keep living."

Those who claim that Yahweh was Jesus, and that Yahweh Himself died, are being deceitful. They misuse

words and concepts. They don't believe He actually died. They theorize that He went into an altered state of life. In order for their theories to work, Yahweh couldn't have fully died (i.e., ceased to exist) because that would have left no one to raise Him back to life (i.e., back to existence).

If God could die, His power of life would be gone. Obviously, this is not what the churches teach. Instead, they theorize that Yahweh disguised Himself as his own son, feigned his own death, and then feigned his own raising. Churches allege that He had the power to raise himself ... and that He accomplished the miracle on his own. When they say He died, they are not being truthful.

By their theory, "Jesus" didn't fully die. Then according to Scripture they are lost and their faith is in vain (I Cor 15:12-19).

Death is death. Jesus died. He ceased to live. The churches' version of Jesus (the one they claim did not fully die) is a counterfeit.

However, Scripture is logical and clear. Jesus, the Son of Yahweh, died (ceased to exist). Yahweh, being self-existent, cannot, and did not, die. Jesus, the Son, died. The Ever Living Father then raised His dead Son to new life and placed Him as our King.

ACTS 2:25-28 "THE RIGHT HAND"

For David said concerning Him, "I was seeing the Lord always in my sight, for He is at my right (hand) that I will not be shaken.

"Therefore My heart became cheerful, and My tongue rejoiced; moreover My flesh shall also rest in hope:

"Because you will not forsake my soul to hades, neither will You give your holy One to see corruption.

"You made known to Me the ways of life; You will fill Me with joy with Your face."

HERE is a Davidic prophecy pertaining to the raising of Jesus. By the way, the word "Lord" in Psalm 16:8 (from which Peter quotes) is the Hebrew word "Yahweh." Thus, Peter was obviously referring to Yahweh.

The phrase "at my right" or "from my right" is usually misunderstood. We read about Jesus being "on the right hand" of the Father; "on the right hand" of the throne; etc. People have a tendency to picture someone standing ceremoniously to the right side of someone. But, the phrase clearly has more meaning. It is a Hebrew idiom meaning "supporting me," or "acting in my interest." In Hebrew idiom, the "right hand" was considered the hand of action.

David prophesied of Jesus who would not be left in "hades" (Greek idiom for death) and whose flesh would not have time to decompose in the tomb ... because He was raised and changed on the third day.

The word "hell," in the KJV, is an Old English word meaning "covered over" or "buried." So, you

see, the fact is, everyone goes to hell: HELL IS THE GRAVE.

There are two Greek words wrongly translated "hell" in the KJV. One is "Gehenna" - the name of the refuse dump outside Jerusalem (the city dump). It was the place where refuse was dumped to be burned and covered up. Sometimes corpses of animals and people were disposed there as well. That was where "the worm never dies" (i.e., the maggots and flies work continually). It was also set on fire, so it continually burned and smoldered ("the fire is never quenched") - see Mark 9:43-44.

The fanciful and unscriptural "hell" of the churches originates from pagan myth ... where the so-called souls of men are tortured and burned forever by imagined demons and a supernatural devil.

The other Greek word mistranslated as "hell" is "hades" - corresponding to the Hebrew "sheol" which means "nothingness; emptiness" (i.e., "death" in the sense of "cessation of existence"). It is the world of the dead: "nothingness"; "blank."

ACTS 2:29-30 DAVID WASN'T REFERRING TO HIMSELF

Men, brethren, let me freely speak to you of the patriarch David, that he died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.

Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that from the fruit of his (David's) loins would He (God) seat One on his (David's) throne;

PETER makes it perfectly clear that David was NOT speaking of himself in this prophecy. David's words were: "You will not leave ME in death! You will not leave my flesh to decay." HOWEVER, David died. David's flesh decayed.

Peter later says, "His (David's) bones are with us to this day." Thus, Peter declares that this prophecy could NOT have been referring to David.

Clearly, David prophesied that God would raise Jesus and seat Him upon David's throne.

ACTS 2:31-32 JESUS ASCENDS THE THRONE

Having foreseen this, he (David) spoke of the raising up of Christ; that neither was He (Christ) forsaken to hades, nor did His flesh decay.

God raised up this Jesus, of which we all are witnesses.

DAVID prophesied Jesus' ascension to the Throne of David when Yahweh would raise Him from the dead.

Peter was declaring that Jesus had fulfilled the prophecy and was reigning upon the throne.

UNDERSTANDING "HELL"

In English

Hell: "cover" (i.e., "the grave"). "Helling" means to cover with soil.

In New Testament

"Hell" [Gk - GEHENNA]: the refuse pit outside Jerusalem.

"Hell" [Gk - HADES]: "death" (i.e., nonexistence). Emptiness.

David prophesied it, and Peter confirmed it. God had raised Jesus as King on the Throne of David over New Jerusalem. Peter used Old Testament terms to define it.

QUESTION: Why do you say that Futurism implies that Jesus failed to ascend to the throne? Couldn't Jesus have become king, then left Earth — letting earthly events develop — to return later, at a pre-determined date, to establish His kingdom?

BRITISH-ISRAELISM, FUTURISM, AND “DAVID’S THRONE”

British-Israelism is a stumbling block for some. While it correctly points to the racial connection between Europeans and Jacob Israel, it also carries erroneous baggage derived from old church doctrine and British myth.

For instance, British-Israelism claims that Jesus was unable to take the throne of David at His “first advent” (sic), and that He retreated somewhere into outer space to await another chance at securing His kingdom here on Earth. It also claims that as He waits “out there” His throne is being occupied and preserved in London by the British Crown. In other words, they teach that the current reigning Monarch over England sits upon Christ’s Throne. After the present Queen Elizabeth dies, the throne-holder will be Charles – if he’s still around. These are some of the ludicrous tenets of British-Israelism.

Now, it is true that the antique chair upon which the Kings and Queens of England are ritually crowned has a compartment under it for a special stone referred to as “Jacob’s Pillow,” “Jacob’s Pillar,” or “the

Stone of Scone.” They claim that stone is the very one that Jacob anointed (Genesis 28:18). That stone is, in itself, an important historical evidence of the racial connection to Old Israel. The British Crown has preserved this historic monument under the pretense that it still constitutes David’s Throne. It may have been, at one time, the stone over which David, Solomon, and the kings of Israel were crowned and anointed.

British-Israelites believe that when Jesus finally gets a chance to come back and claim His kingdom, He will assume the British Crown with its stone and chair.

As interesting and historically important as the stone and chair may be, it does not give the British Crown title to the Throne of David. Christ’s Throne is a much higher setting, a much grander scale, and is occupied by a greater King than found in the houses of British royalty.

Christ’s Throne is not a physical location – certainly not in London! It is a status – not a location. Jesus “sits” upon it (i.e., occupies it). He ascended it when God raised Him to immortality and gave Him authority over all creation (Mtt. 28:18; Acts 2:32).

ACTS 2:33-36 JESUS WAS GIVEN ALL AUTHORITY OVER ISRAEL (NEW JERUSALEM)

Therefore having exalted to the right hand of God and having received of the Father the promise of the holy spirit, He poured out this, which you now see and hear.

For it was not David who ascended upon high: but he, himself, is saying, “The Lord said to my Lord, Be sitting (reigning) at my right (hand),

“Until I put your enemies at your feet as a footstool.”

Therefore let all the House of Israel know assuredly, that God made that same Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.

THUS, ended Peter’s Pentecost sermon. His message proposed something that was, from the world’s perspective, quite impossible. Jesus had been crucified. He died. The men in power had disposed of Him. His threat to their domination had been eliminated – they thought.

What they hadn’t counted on was God raising Him up and giving Him an even greater position than before.

Jesus had caused the Roman and Judean establishment a great deal of trouble. And for that, they murdered Him – “legally.” The politicians and the courts did “what they claimed was necessary”:

“... it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.”

John 11:50

“Now Caiaphas was he which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.”

John 18:14

Some things never change. Politicians determine what is good for “the state” (which they deceptively call “the people”). In truth, “the people” are NOT the state. They never have been, and they never will be. The government is the state! So, whatever the politicians lust after ... they callously take it

by saying that it is “good for the nation” (or what Caiaphas and modern politicians cunningly call “the people”). And the brainwashed “citizens” assume that it must be good – since the politicians said “it is good for the people.” Thus, the devilish craft of politics carries on from generation to generation.

Jesus had threatened the establishment (the state). The guardians of the establishment made the decision that it was expedient to execute this man to protect “the people” (cleverly so-called) when in fact the politicians were only protecting themselves.

But, Jesus didn’t stay dead. He was raised up on the third day.

He was given immortal life and all authority over God’s creation. But the world couldn’t (and still can’t) perceive Him. They thought He stayed dead.

Thus it is, also, with most churches. They mouth the words, “Jesus reigns” – but they don’t really believe it. And, to avoid having to deal with a living, reigning King Jesus, they mentally remove Him off to outer space – millions of miles away from their coveted system here on Earth.

Peter told them then (and us today) that Jesus lives and reigns. Those who refuse to accept Peter’s message are missing the gospel message.

ACTS 2:37-38 BAPTISM DOES NOT CAUSE REPENTANCE

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

Then Peter said to them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the releasing of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of holy spirit.

THE called-out ones who heard Peter then wanted to know what they must do. Peter told them to “repent!”

“Repent” means, literally, to change your way. The Greek word is “*metanoeo*” and means “to change direction.” When you repent, you do an about face – turn around – and go in the opposite direction. And so, when these listeners asked, “What shall we do?” Peter replied, “Stop living and thinking the way you have, and now go in the opposite direction.”

This was a tall order. It is not easy to change the way you perceive the world: to change your life and switch your paradigm.

Notice, also, in verse 38, the word “repent” comes before the word “baptized.” This was not just by chance. It shows the proper order. Repentance must precede baptism. You see, baptism does

not cause repentance. Rather, it is the other way around. Repentance and obedience causes one to be baptized.

People often wrongly think that baptism somehow washes away sins, or magically changes you. However, it does not do that. Baptism is only a symbol. It symbolizes the change that has already happened inside you.

The phrase “for the releasing of sins” in verse 38, does not mean that baptism causes the releasing of sins (i.e., forgiveness). It means that baptism represents (symbolizes) the releasing of sins.

Words are commonly misread, or misrepresented, in the English versions of the Bible – perhaps more than any other book common to our people. The King James Version renders this phrase: “... for the remission of sins.” It is important that you understand that

the little word “for” is translated from a Greek word meaning “representing.” Otherwise, you may unwittingly think it is saying “Repent, and be baptized to cause the release of sins ...”

Baptism does not CAUSE forgiveness. Baptism SYMBOLIZES forgiveness and new birth. It is an outward expression of what is happening inwardly. The ritual is only the form – not the substance. The substance is the inward change and “forgiveness” through the grace of Christ. Baptism symbolizes 1. **Death** (of the old man), 2. **Burial** (in water), and 3. **The Raising** (out of water) out of death, to new life (new birth). Baptism portrays forgiveness and a new start. It portrays repentance and new birth.

Baptism is the symbol: it is NOT the cause. The cause is the inward work of the GRACE OF CHRIST.

ACTS 2:39 THE PROMISE

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

THROUGH Jesus, God was **calling-out** many Israelites. Some were local and some were scattered in the nations. The “call” was fulfillment of “the promise” given many years earlier. It was a family promise because it was given to one man (Abraham) and to his descendants (Gen. 28: 10-15). It came down through the family of Jacob Israel – Abraham’s grandson.

QUESTION: If only Israelites received the promise, does that mean that other races have no access to salvation?

ACTS 2:40-41 BELIEVERS HEARD, REPENTED, AND WERE SAVED

And with many other words did he (Peter) testify and exhort, saying, May you be saved out of this crooked generation.

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

THAT was a profitable day for the Kingdom of Christ! This multitude was re-deemed out of the world system of that day. This was a BIG thing. It was more than religious – it was political. Three thousand people suddenly defected from the current system and went over to the Kingdom of Christ. This was HUGE!

It is unlikely that all 3,000 were BAPTIZED on that day. Thus the “ADDING” of souls is not equated with the “BAPTIZING” of souls.

The difference is important in that the souls were “added” ... and then they were baptized later to show they had been added to the body of Christ. Baptism is the good faith action following the actual repentance and “adding.”

Approaching this question from a basis of mathematics also helps to see the common sense of this symbolism. With twelve disciples working nine hours straight, with no breaks or meals, each disciple would have had to baptize one person every two minutes in order to process 3,000. While that may sound possible, it is unlikely. In fact, much of the day had already passed before the baptizing began.

The more logical possibility is that some of the 3,000 were baptized then, and some were baptized the next day or later. We know they were baptized because this verse says they were.

ACTS 2:42-47 COMMUNITY! NOT COMMUNISM!

And they were continuing in the teaching of the apostles, and in community, and in meals, and in prayers.

And fear was coming upon every soul, but many proofs and signs were occurring through the apostles.

And all who believed at that place were having all things in common;

And they were selling their possessions and properties, and distributing them to all daily, according as anyone was needing.

And enduring likemindedly in the temple, and taking meals from house to house, did eat their food with gladness and singleness of heart.

Praising God, and having favor with the whole people. And the Lord was adding daily the ones being saved at that time.

WAS this an experiment in Socialism? Or was it merely practical community/family order? Jesus (the Head of the family/ecclesia) told them that they needed to divest from the Judean system and prepare to leave the area. So they were selling their local investments and pooling their resources. They were preparing to take the gospel to the rest of Judea and then to Samaria ... then to the outlying nations where other Israelites had migrated – as it says in Acts 1:8.

Also, they were instructed (as recorded in Matthew 24) that Jerusalem was about to fall under judgment. Jerusalem was scheduled for destruction. Thus, believing Jesus' warning, they sold their investments in old Jerusalem and they began investing in **New Jerusalem** (i.e., Christ's Kingdom).

If you were told that within the next 40 years the city you lived in was going to be leveled to the ground, you'd probably start looking for a way to divest yourself of your holdings there and go somewhere else – wouldn't you? Or, at least you would find another place to live. That's just common sense.

That is part of the reason why the apostles liquidated their assets and banded together. They were not experimenting in Socialism. As a community (an ecclesia) they agreed to support one another – for, in supporting each other they strengthened the Body of Christ, as well as their chances of success as pioneers in a new venture. It was common sense pioneering.

The KJV says the Lord was "adding to the church." However, the Greek manuscript correctly says, "He was adding to the numbers being saved."

It's interesting, here, that they were doing some of this work right in the temple – right in the jaws

of hell, you could say. They were pulling people out of the horrible situation of church-state slavery – showing them the Kingdom of Christ: a new freedom.

Mighty works of God were occurring there – including the raising of the dead (the spiritual dead). People were receiving holy inspiration. They were being changed and their lives were redirected. People were converting in large numbers. It was a revolution.

The new converts soon found that the enemies of Jesus were unable to stop the wave of freedom that was surging through them. The proofs and signs appearing to the people of the city were so impressive that the apostles were actually able to work right there in the belly of the Beast – the center of political/religious wickedness and corruption.

But, the awakening would not live in Jerusalem for long. The dynamic (the driving force) would move on, and the awakening would be exported elsewhere. The miracle first planted in Jerusalem found no soil there in which to take root. It soon departed from there and found fertile soils elsewhere.

Timing is important. The time for Jerusalem was quickly running out! Jesus was adding as many "as should be saved." This does not

mean the converts would be saved from eternal torture in Hell. Nor does it mean that they would be sure to get their ticket to some mythical Utopia in the clouds. It means they were being saved from ignorance, blindness and superstition; saved from religious and political paganism of their day; and saved from the coming judgment that was coming upon Jerusalem. In 70 A.D. (40 years later), that judgment came when the Roman general Titus invaded, leveled and burned the city.

Those residents who sold their possessions, packed their things and left the area were saved from the "coming judgment."

QUESTION: By eliminating the great hope of Christ's return to vindicate the righteous, the Final Judgment Day to retaliate against the wicked, and the transporting of "the saved" into the millennial kingdom, aren't you belittling the great glory of God and the future vindication of believers?

END OF CHAPTER TWO.

FOR ANSWERS AND NOTES, SEE ENCLOSED "ANSWER SECTION."

ANSWERS & COMMENTS

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

CHAPTER TWO:

POINTS TO REMEMBER:

1. The purpose of this study is to show the practicality and common sense teachings of the book of Acts; also its record of the monumental events that occurred as a result of Christ's mortal life, crucifixion, raising, and ascension to the Throne.

2. "Speaking in tongues," according to Acts 2, meant the disciples were able, by a miracle, to speak and/or hear in other extant languages and dialects so many people of other countries could receive the gospel of the kingdom. "Tongues" was NOT the embarrassing spectacle of people sputtering forth incomprehensible noises, gobbledygook, and verbal blabbering.

3. "The Day of the Lord," in Joel's prophecy, referred to a coming judgment which was to befall Jerusalem. Many such judgments (days of the Lord) have occurred. The Bible describes no such thing as "one final day of judgment" for all time. There are many "days of the Lord."

4. The KJV phrase, "in the last days" is better translated "in latter days." It does not refer to a mythical "end of the world," or the "end of all time." From our study of Joel and Acts we see that it means "at a later time."

5. The specific signs, wonders and miracles Peter spoke of (the sun going dark; the moon turning to blood; the pouring out of spirit upon the people) occurred in the first century ... most of them before and during the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

6. Israelites are as guilty as anyone else for the crucifixion of Christ – the blame was not solely on the Pharisees, the Sanhedrin and the Romans.

7. In the course of Acts 2, we see proof that Jesus and Yahweh are NOT one and the same person ... as claimed by the churches.

Jesus died. Yahweh cannot die.

Jesus was raised to new life from the grave by Yahweh who chose to not "forsake" Jesus in death.

This logically precludes the theory that both are only one person playing the parts of both Father and Son.

8. David's prophecy in Psalms 16 teaches that Jesus was to sit on David's Throne at His (Jesus') raising. British-Israel's Stone of Scone in England was once connected with David's throne. The present Throne of David (Jesus' Throne) is no longer the old stone. It is much grander.

9. When Jesus was raised up, He received "all authority" over New Israel. He became the current reigning King in New Jerusalem (which is NOT the old Jerusalem).

10. The act of baptism is not a magic ritual that changes people. The change precedes the baptism ... then the baptism symbolizes the change.

11. Acts 2 does not describe an experiment in Communism. Instead it describes an ecclesia of families who took seriously Peter's sermon and the prophecies of Joel. They sold their Judean lands and local possessions, and banded together to prepare to escape the impending destruction of Jerusalem. They also took up the mission to spread the gospel throughout the nations.

12. The Biblical term "salvation" is NOT a ticket to a mythical "Heaven," or an escape from a mythical fiery "Hell." Rather, man is saved from ignorance, blindness, and self-worship. He is saved from the priests, the politicians and from the judgments

of God which naturally befall a wicked society. Salvation is a practical present-active concept, not a futuristic fairy tale.

ANSWERS:

pg.1

No. Ecstatic ("charismatic") seizures are evidence of pagan religion, not true Christianity. They are hypnotic phenomena associated with historic ecstatic religions, like Shamanism, that predate the writing of the Book of Acts. Hypnosis, and programmed response, are the cornerstones of ecstatic religions.

Putting the label of "Christian" on a religion does NOT make it Christian. Churches call themselves "Christian" when, in fact, they are anything but Christian. The Charismatic movement has its roots in Heathenism, and it completely misses the Christian goal of being practical, industrious and in obedience to God's laws.

pg.3

No. We are not saying that God could not have caused people to hallucinate and mumble, sputter and roll around on the ground. He can do anything. But we are saying is that God had neither reason nor desire to cause people to act in that way. We are also saying that the roots of the Charismatic movement are easily traceable to ancient ecstatic pagan religions, and therefore should not be associated with Godliness.

pg. 4

Going into an ecstatic trance is no way to display a spirit of holiness. Ecstatic trances produce hallucination.

The holy spirit is not hallucination – it is motivation to be separate. In I John 4, we read that one's spirit can be judged by its witness (its effect

upon people). A motive bears fruit in the way it moves people. One's work is judged by its fruit. Godly fruit evidences a Godly spirit.

"Holy spirit" means "special, separate spirit," or "special, separate motivation." With respect to the leading of God, it means "motivation from God to separate yourself from the ways of the world."

There is nothing Godly about hysteria, confusion, and ecstatic unintelligible blabbering.

pg. 5

"The Final Judgment Day," "The End of The World," "The Return of Christ," "The Destruction of The Old Planet Earth," and "Recreating a New Planet Earth," are concepts that are derived from non-Biblical sources. They are concepts that non-Christian theologians have read into the Bible via non-Biblical religion, twisted translations, and wild imaginations.

These are the basic tenets of church religion today. They are typical counterfeit religion, and they have nothing to do with true Christianity.

pg. 6

a) No. Christ's Kingdom does not require, nor is it waiting for, a sinless Earth. Christ's Kingdom (Reign) is tied in with Mankind including man's error and sin. Indeed, the purpose of Christ's Reign is to help and bless Man who struggles against sin and error. If Man, and the Earth, were sin-free and error-free, what need would we have for His kingdom?

Cleansing sin from the Earth is one thing. But, waiting for a sinless Earth before the Kingdom can exist is another thing altogether.

The purpose of the Kingdom of Christ is to benefit and cleanse the affairs of Man.

b) The racially-mixed, and religiously-mixed Jews (the religious and political leaders of Judea) were unquestionably behind the wicked murder of Jesus. However, local Israelites also partici-

pated in it. They were complicit to the crime because they elected to raise no objection. Furthermore, for scores of preceding years they passively accepted the state system of Judea and Jerusalem, thus they declined to stand against the political criminals who eventually murdered Jesus.

Furthermore, Jesus made himself vulnerable to the religious and political criminals of Judea for the sake of Israelites ... whom He came to redeem. He went to Jerusalem for THEM. The promise of His coming was to THEM first – not to the Jews. He made Himself vulnerable for the sake of the Israelites. That was His mission. The Jews and all others were a side issue. They simply acted the role of any world-system-oriented corrupt culture.

But Jesus was expressly sent to Israelites. Only the Israelites could have rejected Him ... because they were the ones to whom He was sent. Again, it was the Israelites who had been called out through Moses, and they chose to reject God's Reign over them (1 Sam. 8:7) ... thus necessitating Jesus' sacrifice.

pg. 9

Futurism implies that Jesus participated in a temporary visit, and that it was meant to be nothing solid and permanent. It was a quick visit, and then a quick retreat.

However, none of the Old Testament prophecies indicate that Jesus would make a quick stop off on Planet Earth, and then abandon it again for a few thousand years.

On the contrary, the promises of a Savior were of substance and permanence. Futurism, on the other hand, puts all importance, and real salvation, off into the future. Thus, Futurism rejects the salvation of Christ as it was manifested in the First Century. Futurism's "salvation" is one of its own invention, in its own time.

Futurism's depiction of Jesus is that of failed and deceptive "savior." It puts Christ's throne out of His reach – off in the future. It puts Jesus away from His kingdom, awaiting a second

chance to make good.

pg. 11

This special promise or covenant was for Abraham and his seed. It was a family promise. However, there are two elements of this promise which require special notice:

1. The Abrahamic promise or covenant did not include ALL of his racial descendants. Rather it was for only those of his descendants who also became spiritual children of Abraham (Mtt. 3:9-12; Rm. 9:6-8).

2. The promise was not for "salvation." It was for "blessing" and "multiplying." (Heb. 6:13-18)

Thus, Abraham's "family" was not reckoned strictly by blood. Not all racial Israelites are true children: i.e., "sons." (Rom. 9:6-8).

Furthermore, the salvation of Jesus was not strictly the same as the promise to Abraham. It blessed and benefited Abraham's children, but the benefits went beyond Israel.

In fact, the purpose of blessing and multiplying Israel was so that Israel could then bless the other nations (i.e., Jesus blessed the nations THROUGH reborn Israel) (Gen. 28:14; Rev. 22:17).

pg. 12

On the contrary! The Futurists are the ones who belittle God by putting Him off, and His Son, for the last 1900 years. Ignoring almost two millennia of Christ's Reign can only be called wicked and foolish.

The problem with the Futurists is that they have tunnel vision. They refuse, or do not have the ability, to see Christ's Kingdom except in their predefined terms and parameters. They live in a world of illusion, and look for an imaginary Jesus with an imaginary future kingdom.

Consequently, reality itself escapes them. Futurists, therefore, are not likely to welcome truth and reality regardless where it may originate.