

Peter's First Sermon

Acts 2:15-21

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Ten days before Pentecost Jesus ascended to heaven. He had just commanded His Apostles to preach the Gospel to all the nations. Yet, just before ascending, He told them to delay their mission until they received the Spirit's power. *"And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me" (Acts 1:4 NKJV).*

The importance of Peter's Pentecost sermon cannot be overstated. That it was clearly the first sermon preached within this Gospel dispensation cannot be questioned. That the words spoken were by the power of the Holy Spirit is equally indisputable. There is simply no way to avoid the conclusion that this sermon applied to the "Church" of Jesus Christ. Luke's statement that *"the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved"* (Acts 2:47), unquestionably makes Peter's sermon applicable to the "Church."

We stated in the introduction that one of our goals in this series of articles was to demonstrate the reliance of the New Testament writers on Jesus' Olivet Discourse. The very first sermon preached in this dispensation does just that. It shows that Peter's own understanding of prophecy at this time was still very much based upon the Old Testament and what Jesus taught him in the Olivet Discourse.

He began by defending the supernatural event the crowd had just witnessed, uneducated Galileans speaking in the languages of many other nations. He did this by citing Joel's prophecy, identifying the event they had just witnessed as the fulfillment of that prophecy.

Acts 2:15-21

15 For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day.

*16 **But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:***

*17 'And it shall come to pass in the **last days**, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams.*

18 And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy.

*19 I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: **Blood and fire and vapor of smoke.***

20 *The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD.*

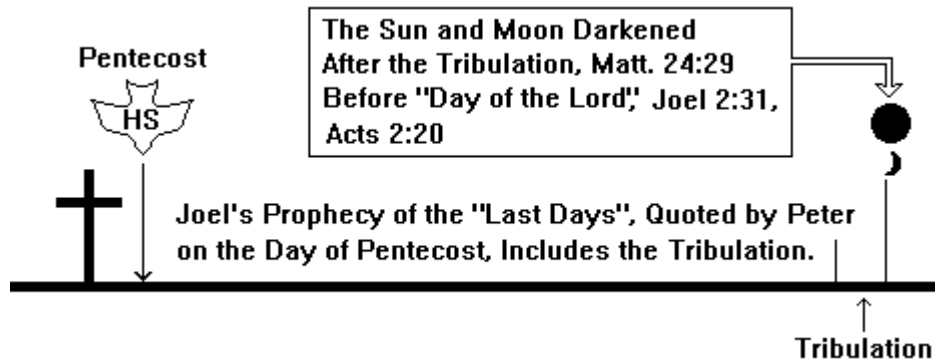
21 *And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved.*

Verses 19 & 20 describe the very things Jesus said would immediately precede His coming back for His elect. These are the very things for which He told the disciples to be watching.

Olivet Discourse	Peter's Pentecost Sermon
<p>Matt 24:29-31</p> <p>29 "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.</p> <p>30 Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.</p> <p>31 And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.</p>	<p>Acts 2:19-20</p> <p>19 I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: Blood and fire and vapor of smoke.</p> <p>20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD.</p>

Acts 2 displays Peter's thinking by his application of Old Testament prophecy. On the day of Pentecost, Peter placed himself within Joel's prophecy of the "last days" (Acts 2:17). According to Peter, the "last days" had already begun. This period would conclude with the coming of the "Day of the Lord," which would be heralded by the same cosmic signs Jesus said would occur "*immediately after the tribulation.*" It is apparent, from Peter's use of Joel's prophecy, he expected to continue with the task of world evangelism **until the end of the tribulation.** The promise, "*whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved,*" spans the time from Pentecost until the cosmic signs at the end of the tribulation. Peter made this connection, no doubt, because Jesus

said the gospel must first be preached among all nations before He would return, "*immediately after the tribulation.*"



According to Peter, between the Day of Pentecost, and the cosmic signs "*immediately after the tribulation,*" the Spirit of God would be poured out upon all flesh. During this day of grace, **which includes the tribulation**, anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

If we pick out the two most important signs Jesus gave His disciples in Matthew twenty four, they would be the preaching of the gospel to all the world (Matt. 24:14), and the cosmic signs just before His coming (Matt. 24:29). These two signs must have had a huge impact on Peter, because he alluded to both in his sermon. Peter indicated to the crowd when the present age of grace will end. It will end when the sun and moon are darkened. It will end with blood, fire, and pillars of smoke at Christ's coming in power and glory. Undoubtedly, Peter believed the "*end of the age*" would come "*immediately after the tribulation,*" just as Jesus taught him. Peter's sermon is incompatible with pretribulationism, but fits smoothly with posttribulationism. It shows that Peter understood Jesus' teaching in a very straightforward way. He viewed the return of Jesus, related to this dispensation, as His coming in the Olivet Discourse and in Old Testament prophecy.