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Peter Speaks to the Shavu'ot Crowd

The Jews are Saved Through the Preaching of Peter

2: 14-41

30 AD

About this time, Yeshua was crucified under Pontius Pilate. In addition, the resurrection appearances, Shavu'ot, the initial growth of the Messianic community in and around Yerushalayim are in view.

Peter speaks to the Shavu'ot crowd DIG: Compare Peter and the other apostles in John 18:25-27 and 20:19 with their actions here. What accounts for the great difference? How do you see Luke 24:44-49 reflected in this proclamation? Given the audience, why would Peter use so many quotes from the TaNaKh? What is the point Peter wants people to understand about current events (2:13, 17-18)? Since the prophets used dramatic figurative language to indicate YHVH was going to deal with His people in a new way, how do you understand verses 19-21? What tells you Joel's prophecy is coming true today? How familiar were these people with the events of Yeshua's life? How might they be dealing with the rumors of an empty tomb? Why does Peter emphasize the resurrection in verses 24, 31-32)?

REFLECT: To repent and be baptized in Yeshua's name meant to turn away from all other loyalties and affirm allegiance to Him as not only your Savior, but also your Lord. In what ways does that call still present a challenge to you? How have you experienced the reality of God's promises to those who answer that call? From Peter's proclamation, what facts about Yeshua would be key to non-believers to understand? When were you saved? Who was influential in that process? What convinced you of your need for Him? What difference does it make to you that Christ really is the reigning King over all? How does that truth impact your daily life? In Chapter 2, what was the apostles' part and God's part in this witnessing for Messiah? When was the last time you seized an opportunity to witness for Jesus? What happened? How are you like Peter? Unlike him? What encourages you as you read the words that Peter spoke?

The assembled crowd (**to see link click [A1](#) - The Ruach ha-Kodesh Comes at Shavu'ot**) provided **Peter** with **his** opportunity to explain the significance of what was happening. **His** speech begins with an allusion of the pouring out of **the Ruach** as the fulfilment of prophecy from **Joel 2:17-21 LXX (Septuagint)**. **Peter** begins **his** quote from the prophet **Joel** with, "**And it shall be in the last days,**" says **God**, "**that I will pour out My Rauch on all flesh . . .**" Then **he** transitions from the gift of **the Spirit** back to the point of connection: **Yeshua Messiah ha-Natzrati**. **The Lord's** resurrection is not argued for by **Peter**, **he** merely proclaims it as fact.



Peter had been the acknowledged leader and often the spokesman for **the apostles** during **Messiah's** earthly ministry. **Standing with the Eleven, he addressed** the critics who said the righteous of the TaNaKh speaking in other languages were **drunk**. **Raising his voice** so the huge crowd could hear **him**, **he** declared with no hesitation in **his** heart: **Fellow Judeans and all who are staying in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and pay attention to my words. These men are not drunk, as you suppose - for it's only the third hour of the day.** It was only **nine o'clock** in the morning, which was the hour of prayer. And because it was **Shavu'ot** it was also the time for the regular morning sacrifice, to be followed by the special **Shavu'ot** sacrifice. Furthermore, **the Jewish** custom was to drink wine in the evening (**2:14-15**)! **His** address was respectful, yet firm.

But this is what was spoken about through the prophet Joel (2:16): Nothing that **Joel** prophesied happened in **Acts 2**, and what happened in **Acts 2** isn't even mentioned in **Joel 2**. **Joel** doesn't mention the speaking in **languages** whatsoever. **He** does, however, deal with the pouring out of **the Ruach ha-Kodesh** on all **Isra'el** in **the last days**. **He** deals with the national regeneration of **Isra'el** at the end of the Great Tribulation before the

establishment of the messianic Kingdom (see the commentary on [Revelation Ev - The Basis for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ](#)). Consequently, this was not a fulfillment of **Joel 2**, however the one point of similarity between **Joel 3:1-2** and **Acts 2** is the outpouring of **the Spirit of God**. Thus **Peter** was telling the skeptics in the audience what **the Spirit of God** *could* do!

**And it shall be in the last days, says God,
'that I will pour out My Ruach on all [Jewish] flesh.
Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams.
Even on My slaves, male and female,
I will pour out My Ruach in those days,
and they shall prophesy.**

**And I will give wonders in the sky above
and signs on the earth beneath -
blood, and fire, and smoky vapor.
The sun shall be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood**

before the great and glorious Day of YHVH comes. After hearing **Peter** quote **Joel's** description of **the Day of the Lord** was terrifying and the crowd would naturally want to know how to avoid being caught in that time of terror and devastation. **Peter** then delivers the climax of **his** quote from **Joel**, "**And it shall be that everyone who calls on the name of Adonai shall be saved**" (2:17-21 LXX). **Luke** quotes the TaNaKh almost always in a form either corresponding to the LXX or close to it, and not according to the Hebrew Masoretic Text. Here **Joel 3:1-5a** is quoted close but not exactly corresponding to the LXX.⁴⁵

The First Coming of **Christ** ushered in **the last days**. **First John 2:18a** says: **Dear children, this is the last hour. Peter** writes that **Messiah was revealed in these last times for your sake (First Peter 1:20)**. The writer to the **Hebrews** informs us **in these last days God has spoken to us by His Son (Hebrews 1:2)**, and **now He has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of Himself (9:26b)**. Therefore, **the last days** have lasted about two thousand years. During this time **Ha'Shem** has graciously called the Goyim to salvation and continued to shepherd **Isra'el**. The complete fulfillment of **Joel's** prophecy awaits the messianic Kingdom.

Then **Peter** describes to **his** hearers exactly who that **Savior** is and what **He** requires for

salvation. **Men of Isra'el, hear these words! Yeshua ha-Natzrati - a Man authenticated to you by God with mighty deeds and wonders and signs God performed through Him in your midst, as you yourselves know - this Yeshua, given over by God's predetermined plan and foreknowledge, nailed to the cross by the hand of Pharisees and Sadducees . . . lawless men.** Even if **all Isra'el** had accepted **Jesus as the Messiah, He** still would have died, probably at the hands of the Romans for insurrection. The death of **Messiah** was part of the divine **plan**. But there was a human side of **Jesus'** death, and **Peter** said to those **Jews** gathered in the Temple compound, "**You killed Him!**" However, **God raised Him up, releasing Him from the birth pains of death, He** was born out of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held by it (2:22-24). Like a knife, the accusation pierced **their hearts**, as it does today when any **Jew** is told, "You **Jews** killed Jesus!" However, **Peter's** true charge to the listeners and the false charge against **the Jewish people** today are worlds apart. This verse places the responsibility squarely where it belongs - not resting solely on **the Jews**, but being part of **God's** plan. **David says about Him,**

**'I saw Adonai always before me,
for He is at my right hand so that I might not be shaken.
Therefore my heart was glad and my tongue rejoiced;
moreover, my body also will live in hope,
because You will not abandon my soul to Sh'ol
or let Your Holy One see decay.
You have made known to me the paths of life;
You will fill me with joy in Your presence (2:25-28 LXX).'**

Luke quotes Psalm 16:8-11ab verbatim from the LXX.⁴⁶ Even the rabbis took Psalm 16 to be a messianic Psalm. The Midrash on Psalm 16:9 quotes it as meaning, "My glory rejoices over King Messiah" because after death, then comes the resurrection and be able to walk in the paths of life.

"Brothers, fellow Jews, I can confidently tell you that the patriarch David died and was buried - his tomb is with us to this day. So Peter could not have been speaking of David. Then whom was he speaking? David was a prophet and knew God had sworn with an oath to him to seat one of his descendants on His throne. This basis of the promises to David was his covenant with God (see the commentary on [the Life of David Cu - ADONAI Swore an Oath to David](#)) David was a prophet as well as a king and he saw beforehand and spoke of Messiah's resurrection - that He was not abandoned to Sh'ol, and His body did not see decay. That was true of the Messiah; however, it is not true of David (2:29-31). Thus, Psalm 16 is not speaking about David, but speaking of

David's descendent . . . the resurrected **Messiah**.

This Yeshua God raised up - we all are witnesses! Therefore, being exalted to the right hand of God and receiving from the Father the promise of the Ruach ha-Kodesh (1:4), He poured out this - what you now see and hear (2:32-33). For David did not ascend into the heavens; yet he himself says: The LORD said to my Lord (Greek: kurios), "Sit at my right hand, until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet" (2:34-35 LXX).

Luke quotes the messianic **Psalm 110:1** verbatim from the **LXX**.⁴⁷

The point **Peter** wanted to make from this quotation, was that **David** didn't ascend into heaven. Not only was there no resurrection of **David**, there was no ascension either. So **David's Lord** had to be **Messiah**.

Peter had provided overwhelming evidence from **Jesus'** life, death, resurrection and ascension that **He** is indeed **Isra'el's** long-awaited **Messiah**. Then **he** drew **his** sermon to a powerful conclusion with these ringing words: **Therefore let the whole house of Isra'el know for certain (Greek: asphaltos, meaning that which is beyond any doubt) that God has made Him - this Yeshua whom you had crucified - both Lord and Messiah (2:36)!** The verdict was in, and they were on the wrong side, guilty of opposing **God** and rejecting their **Messiah**. As **Peter** would later put it: **This Yeshua, the one you have crucified, He is "the stone - rejected by you - that has become the chief cornerstone."**

A closer look at the speeches in Acts: Some have a problem trying to explain how **Luke** could explain the copious speech material in **Acts**, at least most of which **Luke** was surely not present to hear. If one takes into account all the discourse material, the speeches in **Acts** make up 365 verses out of about 1,000, meaning over one-third of the book is made up of speeches. But how could **Luke** know what went on behind closed doors? We know that **Joseph of Arimathea** was both a believer and a member of the Great Sanhedrin (**Mark 15:43**). **Nicodemus**, also a believer, was probably in the Sanhedrin also (**John 7:50**). **Luke** carefully investigated everything from the beginning (**Luke 1:3**), and would have consulted them or other Sanhedrin members who came to faith later on. Lastly, we should not minimize the ministry of **the Spirit of God** as **He** inspires the human authors to write down what otherwise could not have been known from any human source. Moshe wasn't there when the universe was created (**Genesis 1:1 to 2:3**), however, we don't doubt his account!

The following shows the distribution of the major speeches in **Acts**: Eight speeches by **Peter: Acts Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, 11** and **13**; two speeches by **James: Acts Chapters 15** and **21**; one speech by **Stephen** in **Acts Chapter 7** and nine speeches by **Paul: Acts Chapters 13, 14, 17, 20, 22, 23, 24, 26** and **28**. Four speeches by non-believers: **Acts 5:35-39** by Gamaliel; **Acts 19:35-40** by a town clerk in Ephesus; **Acts 24:2-8** by a lawyer named Tertullus; **Acts 25:14-21** and **24-27** a recapitulation by Festus.⁴⁸ This last example, a private discussion between Festus and Agrippa in **Acts 25**, is not the sort of material that **Luke** would likely have had access to. Therefore, we must conclude that **the Ruach ha-Kodesh** inspired the human author to record it as written.

These speeches give us a general sense of what was said. They were too short to be transcripts because many of these speeches probably lasted an hour or two. So they are not quoted verbatim. The best way to characterize them would be expert summaries. We must also keep in mind that people of that time were more oriented to oral learning.

The result of Peter's speech. Peter's conclusion to the main body of his speech was devastating. **Now when they heard Peter's charge that they had crucified the Messiah, they were cut to the heart.** Overcome with grief and remorse, **they said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Fellow brethren, what shall we do (2:37)?"** Peter said, "I'm glad you asked," and **addressed them**, saying: **Repent.** The Greek word means *to change one's mind*. But change **their** minds about what? To change **their** minds about **Jesus . . .** that **Jesus** was not demon-possessed (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Ek - It is only by Beelzebub, the Prince of Demons, That This Fellow Drives Out Demons**), which was the basis of **His** rejection, but that **He** really was **the Messiah**. Now this generation to whom **Peter** was speaking had committed the unpardonable sin of rejecting **the Holy Spirit** and under divine judgment, and their judgment would be soon enough (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Mt - The Destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple on Tisha B'Av in 70 AD**). Though nationally that **sin** was unpardonable, however, individually, **they** could be pardoned spiritually, but only after **they repented of their sins**, or *changed their minds* about **Jesus**, and believed that **He** was **the Messiah**. The Good News that **God** forgives makes sense only against the background of the bad news that we have sinned grievously.

In believers' **immersion**, we identify ourselves with the death, burial and resurrection of **Yeshua**. Now repentance demands the witness of **immersion**. **Peter's** audience need to change **their** identification to change **their** association. However, because of the unforgiveable **sin** (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Em - Whoever Blasphemes Against the Holy Spirit Will Never Be Forgiven**), this generation was under physical

judgment (see the commentary on [The Life of Christ Ej - The Point of No Return for Isra'el](#)). And until 70 AD the only way **Jewish** believers could hope to escape the physical judgment was to change their identification and separate from Judaism. And that break came, then as it is today, with water **immersion**. It is an outward sign of an inward conviction. Then **they** would escape the coming Roman tsunami.

That is why **immersion** is so closely identified with salvation. That is why **Peter** could say: **Let each of you be immersed in the name of Messiah Yeshua** (not the in the name of Moses, not in the name of the priesthood), because **you** are adding **the name of Yeshua** to **your** faith for **the removal of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Ruach ha-Kodesh. For the promise is for you (Jews) and your children, and for all who are far away - as many as Adonai our God calls to Himself (2:38-39).** The Jews had two different types of **immersion**. **First there is proselyte immersion. When Gentiles converted to Judaism they were fully immersed in water, changing their association. They were no longer identified with paganism, but with the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and the Jewish people.** Then there was the **immersion of John**, and those identifying themselves with **his** back to **God** message. This **immersion** was to be **in the name of Messiah Yeshua**, this was the new association. It would separate them from **proselyte immersion** and **John's** back to **God immersion**.

Peter's description of those who would receive **the Ruach** as those **Adonai our God calls to Himself (2:39)** describes **God's** sovereignty at work in salvation. It presents the necessary balance to the statement in **2:21** that **everyone who calls on the name of Adonai shall be saved (2:21 LXX)**. A biblical view of salvation does not exclude either human responsibility or divine sovereignty, but allows them to remain in tension. We must not resist the attempt to harmonize what Scripture does not, and be content in the knowledge that there is no ultimate contradiction in **God's** mind.⁴⁹ Like **the Trinity**, this is an antinomy, meaning *two things that seem to be contradictory, however both are true*. **God** is **three Persons**, yet **He** is **One (Deuteronomy 6:4)**; and **God** chooses us **before the creation of the world (Ephesians 1:4)**, yet we have to make a decision to accept **Yeshua** as **Messiah** or not - we have free will. We can say no to **God** and make it stick. This is an antimony.

But **Peter** does not say that **immersion** will save them spiritually. The Bible consistently teaches that salvation is always through faith (**Ephesians 2:8-9**). To **the Jews** to whom **he** was speaking, **repentance** would save them spiritually, and **immersion** would save them physically because it would separate them from the cursed generation of that day. Then **Luke** summarizes **Peter's** sermon, which was probably much longer than what is written

here. **With many other words he warned them and kept urging them**, saying: **Save yourselves from this twisted generation** of the unpardonable **sin (2:40)!⁵⁰**

So those who received his message were immersed, and that day about three thousand souls were added (2:41). Some object to keep statistics on how many people came to trust **Yeshua** and join congregation of believers. **Ha'Shem** thinks otherwise. In the book of **Acts Luke** traces the growth of the Messianic Community from at least **120 (1:14)** to some **3,120** (here). **About five thousand men**, not counting the women and children, were added soon after (**4:4**). Some twenty years later there were **many tens of thousands . . . among the Judeans of Jerusalem alone (20:21)**. Besides these statistics we read that **the Lord added to their number daily (2:47), the number of disciples was growing (6:1), their numbers kept multiplying (6:7), and a great number of people trusted and turned to the Lord (11:21)**. Moreover, **Luke** takes note of key subgroups: **a large number of priests became obedient to the faith (6:7), and some of those who came to believe were from the party of the Pharisees (15:5)**. The data imply that the early **Jewish** evangelism was successful. A genuine movement arose in which hundreds of thousands of **Jews** came to faith in **Yeshua the Jewish Messiah** and it was still going on at the close of the book of **Acts (28:24-25)**.⁵¹

A closer look at the keys to the Kingdom: At **Caesarea Philippi Peter** declared that **Yeshua** was the **Messiah, the Son of the living God**. In response, **Jesus** said: **I will give you the keys of the kingdom of Heaven** (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Ex - On This Rock I Will Build My Church**). Whenever the words **key** or **keys** is used symbolically in the Bible, it always symbolizes the authority to open or close doors (**Judges 3:25; First Chronicles 9:27; Isaiah 22:20-24; Matthew 16:19a; Revelation 1:18, 3:7, 9:1 and 20:1**). **Peter** will be responsible to open the doors of **the Church**. **He** has a special role in the book of **Acts**. In the Dispensation of the Torah, humanity was divided into two groups, **Jews** and **Gentiles**. But in the Dispensation of Grace, because of what went on in the intertestamental period, there were three groups of people, **Jews, Gentiles** and **Samaritans (Matthew 10:5-6)**. **Peter** would be the **key** person (pun intended) in bringing in the **Jews (Acts 2), the Samaritans (Acts 8), and the Gentiles (Acts 10)** into **the Church** by receiving **the Holy Spirit**. Once **he** opened the door it stayed open.

As we proceed through the book of **Acts** we will be comparing the way salvation comes to **the Jews, the Samaritans and the Gentiles**, showing, as was the case with the way **Yeshua** healed, there is no set order in the book of **Acts**. **This is a transitional book and a historical book, and you can't establish doctrine based upon history. You base doctrine on theological statements in the epistles. Historical facts can illustrate the**

doctrine but they cannot develop doctrine on their own.

The gift of **languages (tongues)** can be seen four times in the book, **Acts 2, Acts 8, Acts 10** and **Acts 19**. There is not set order leading up to immersion by **the Spirit** and subsequent **speaking in tongues**. Here in **Acts 2** with salvation coming to **the Jews**, the order was first repentance, then water immersion, and then receiving **Spirit** immersion by **the Ruach ha-Kodesh** as evidenced by **speaking in languages**. Again, you don't build doctrine on history. Keep this order in mind and we will see how it was different with **the Samaritans, the Gentiles** and **John's disciples**.

To understand the differences in the four appearances of **languages** in **Acts**, we will ask six questions as we come to each passage. **However, the one key common element in all four cases is that languages (ie tongues) are for the purpose of authentication.**

1. Who received it? Some feel that in **Act 2:1-13**, all those in the upper room were speaking in foreign **languages**. However contextually, it's more likely that only the twelve **apostles** received the gift because in **2:1** you have the words **they** and **all, they were all together in one place**. But the antecedent (in Greek grammar you go back to the nearest antecedent) to **they** and **all** in **2:1** is **1:26**, which in this case it is **Matthias and the eleven apostles**, not the one hundred and twenty. This view is reinforced in **2:7** where it describes those speaking in **languages**, "**Aren't all of these who are speaking Galileans?**" It is not likely that all one hundred and twenty were **Galileans**. In addition, in **2:14** it only mentions **Peter** and **the Eleven** and not the others. So who received it, most likely, only **the Twelve**. However, we can't be dogmatic about it. If all one hundred and twenty received the gift of **languages** it wouldn't change anything.

2. What were they? They were **apostles (1:26; 2:14)**, which makes them a separate category from the other believers. **The apostles** were sent by **Yeshua** for a special ministry - to preach the gospel of **Jesus Christ**. **The apostles** were **the foundation** of the Church with **Messiah Himself** being **the chief cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20)**. **Peter**, for example, had **the keys to the Kingdom** (see above). **He** had the authority to open the door for all three main ethnic groups at that time (**Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles**). And the gift of **languages** was used to **authenticate his calling, his office, and his message**.

3. What were the circumstances? They were praying and waiting for **the promise of the Father (1:4)**. They experienced the answer to that prayer when **the Ruach ha-Kodesh** was **poured out on the apostles on Shavu'ot (2:33)**.

4. What was the means? The means was direct. No laying on of hands. It was the initial

filling of **the Ruach ha-Kodesh** to have the ability to speak in other **languages** that were previously not known to **them**.

5. What was the purpose in this context? The purpose was **authentication** in two ways. For **the apostles**, it **authenticated** that **the promise of the Father** had come. For the **Jewish** audience, it **authenticated** the message of **the apostles**. They were convinced that **Jesus** was **the Messiah** because **they** saw and experienced something supernatural.

6. What were the results? There were three results. First, **the Jews** of the Diaspora were able to understand the gospel in their own language (**2:8-11**). The second result was conviction (**2:37**). The third result was the salvation of **three thousand Jews** (**2:41**).⁵²

Peter spoke about **the Good News of Yeshua Messiah** and that day about **three thousand souls were added** (**2:41**). In a very special way, those **Jewish** believers were the **first fruits** in fulfillment of Shavu'ot. **James**, in **his** book specifically written to **Jewish** believers (**James 1:1**), said: **God chose to give us** (spiritual) **birth through** (the preaching of the gospel) **the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first fruits of all he created** (**James 1:18**).

Therefore, looking at the big picture, it's important for you to understand that as believers, we write **the Good News** with our lives. Many of your friends or acquaintances don't read **the Good News**. They don't know **Joshua** from **Isaiah** or from **Matthew**. But they are watching you because you say that you follow **Yeshua**. They listen to what you say and they watch what you do. They see if **the Good News** makes any difference in *your* life. And if you act the say way that they act. If you talk the same way that they talk. Or if you go to the same movies that they go to. They have no interest in this "**Yeshua**" thing. So how is your writing going these days? Salvation is not knowing *about* **Yeshua**, it's *knowing* **Yeshua**.

The theme of Shavu'ot can best be summed up by the word revival. **Isra'el** was called to praise **ADONAI** for the first fruits of the ground when they celebrated Sfirat ha-Omer, knowing that those early fruits assured the latter harvest of **Shavu'ot**. This also applies to the Kingdom of **God**. The first fruits of the believers at **Shavu'ot** virtually guaranteed a revival in the latter-day spiritual harvest of **Messiah**. Now we can understand why **YHVH** in the three required pilgrim festivals for every **Jewish** male. As the Passover speaks of redemption, **Shavu'ot** speaks of revival, especially during the Dispensation of Grace (see the commentary on **Hebrews Bp - The Dispensation of Grace**). The message of **Shavu'ot** is one of great hope and joy. May the day come when **the Ruach ha-Kodesh** will be poured out upon the house of David, and **they will look**, in faith, **to the One who was pierced** (**Zechariah 12:10**).⁵³