

ACTS TWO THIRTY EIGHT CONTEXUALLY SIMPLIFIED

Ac.2:38

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. On pioneer preacher, I've forgotten his name, was noted for saying in words similar to the following: "One's proposition when properly understood and defined can be written on a postage stamp."
 - a. Maybe he over simplified a little. But he was on the right track; he had the right idea.
2. I have often said, When one learns the truth about a difficult passage, or gets to the bottom line, so-to-speak, it's as simple as A.B.C.
3. It is not always as simple and easy as A,B,C, to arrive at the truth of a passage and formulate a simple proposition; but when you do, it is.
4. This is the case with the meaning of Ac.2:38. My proposition is this: **Ac.2:38 is the summation and fulfillment of God's two-fold prophetic promise of Joel 2:28-32.**
5. For further introduction to properly set up the study as to the time and events of Ac.2 on Pentecost, we must be reminded:
 - a. That Peter identified Pentecost as "the beginning," (Ac.11:15), the birthday of the Lord church.
 - b. God's prophetic promise in Joel 2:28-32, which Peter quoted and applied beginning on Pentecost, identified it with "the last days," (Ac.2:16-18), which in turn identified it with Isa.2:2,3 and "the last days," when the "Lord's house" (the church, 1Tim.3:15), and/or the kingdom of God, which would be established, with his law, and his word, going forth from Jerusalem, with all nations (both Jew and Gentile) entering it.
 - c. That since Pentecost is when Jesus began to be God's official spokesman, Heb.1:1,2 identifies it as "the last days."
6. With this introduction, we offer the contextual proof of our proposition on Ac.2:38 with out contextual A,B,C simplification of it.

II. DISCUSSION

A: PETER’S INSPIRED “THIS IS THAT” APPLYING GOD’S TWO-FOLD PROPHETIC PROMISE OF JOEL 2:28-32 TO THE EVENTS OF PENTECOST AS THE TIME FOR THE FULFILLMENT PERTAINING:

1. To God’s pouring out of (or from) his Spirit, “spiritual gifts;” such as: “prophecy,” etc., on “all flesh”; that is, on his people of all flesh – both Jew and Gentile, Ac.2:17,18.
2. To salvation from past sins for “whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord,” V.21.

B: PETER’S FOUR-FOLD ARGUMENT TO PROVE TO THIS UNBELEIVING JEWISH AUDIENCE THAT THE VERY JESUS OF NAZARETH IS THE ONE, THE SAVIOR, ON WHOM THEY MUST CALL IN ORDER TO RECEIVE GOD’S TWO-FOLD PROPHETIC PROMISE OF JOEL 2:28-32.

1. His 1st argument (V.22) pertains to Jesus of Nazareth’s life and works among them.
 - a. Doing these miracles and wonders among you which you yourselves witnessed.
 - b. Performing miracles and wonders and signs by which God approved of him; that is, by which he was shown “to be true,” or “proved to be true.”
2. His 2nd argument (V.23) pertains to the death of Jesus.
 - a. To his “being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.”
 - b. In spite of the fact that they “by wicked hands” had “crucified and slain” him, it was by the “determinate (defined, marked out) counsel (purpose, decree, will) of God.”
 - c. Pressure on his Jewish audience begins to build.
3. His 3rd argument (Vv.24-32) Peter finishes his 2nd and begins his 3rd in proof of Jesus of Nazareth, the man, as also the Christ, which pertains to his triumphant resurrection from the death they had inflicted upon him, which Peter presents in a four-fold light.
 - a. 1st he argues that Jesus’ resurrection was effected by God himself, V.24a.
 - b. 2nd he argues that his resurrection was necessitated by Christ himself, “because it was not possible that he should be holden of it;” that is, “by the pains of death.”

- c. 3rd he argues that his resurrection from the dead was foretold by David, their great and beloved king and prophet, Vv.25-31. (So they had every reason to expect it.)
 - d. Finally, he climaxes his 3rd argument concerning the resurrection of Jesus with the eye witness account (V.32). Witnesses who possessed miraculous power to prove or demonstrate that their testimony came from God. Cf. 2Cor.12:12.
4. His 4th argument (Vv.33-35) in proof of the fact that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Lord on whose name they must call to be saved, pertains to the glorious exaltation of his to David's throne at the right hand of God.
- a. His exaltation to God's right hand is manifested by proof which you, this Jewish audience, have both seen and heard, V.33.
 - (1) A resurrection and exaltation which he himself had promised prior to his death and ascension.
 - b. In Vv.34,35 Peter appeals once more to David, especially for the benefit of his present Jewish audience, to prove to them that the exaltation of Jesus to David's throne at God's right hand had been predicted in O.T. prophecy. Cf. Psa.110:1.

C: V.36, PETER'S CONCLUSION TO HIS ARGUMENTATIVE DEVELOPMENT OF HIS PROPOSITION THAT JESUS OF NAZARETH IS THE CHRIST IS INFORMATIVE AND IMPRESSIVE.

1. "Therefore let all of the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."
2. This is the one and only logical, rational, scriptural conclusion to be reached; therefore, Peter's proposition stands proved: *Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ.*
3. They must believe this beyond doubt and act upon their faith.
4. Thus those who were convinced by the evidence learned that, contrary to their previous conception, not only that Jesus is the Christ, but that he was prophesied to sit, not on the earthly

throne as they had expected, but on the throne of the Universe at the right hand of God.

D: V.37, THE IMMEDIATE EFFECT OF PETER’S SERMON ON THOSE OF THIS JEWISH AUDIENCE WHO BELIEVED.

1. Upon hearing it, “they were pricked in their heart,” (V.37a).
 - a. They were convinced of the truth about Jesus of Nazareth being the Christ, the anointed ruler, who is now at the right hand of God reigning.
 - b. They were “under conviction”; they were feeling their own guilt and condemnation.
 - c. They now recognized their need of what Peter said God, in Joel 2:28-32, had prophetically promised in a two-fold manner.
2. In their present faith and crushed by their guilt they asked the all-important question: “*What shall we do?*”
 - a. As yet they have not been told how to receive what Peter had told them God has prophetically promised in Joel 2:28-32.
 - b. He had only said it is now available to those who “call upon the name of the Lord,” Ac.2:21.
 - c. Obviously, they, having now been convinced that they must do what God in Joel 2 had prophetically promised, and that Jesus Christ is the One to call upon for it, are asking how to do that calling to receive what is promised.

E: Vv.38,39, PETER’S ANSWER TO THEIR QUESTION, TELLING THEM HOW OR THE CONDITIONS UPON WHICH THEY COULD RECEIVE THE TWO-FOLD BLESSING GOD PROPHETICALLY PROMISED IN JOEL 2 AS PER AC.2:16-21.

1. 1st V.38a: how to “call on the name of the Lord” to “be saved” as promised in Ac.2:21. Cf. Ac.22:16 and the case of Saul.
2. 2nd V.38b,39, “and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord shall call.”
 - a. “The gift of the Holy Spirit” is what God prophetically promised “his servants” according to Ac.2:17,18.

- (1) And is, identified as “spiritual gifts,” or gifts of the Spirit,” the miraculous power of the Spirit to “prophesy,” etc.
 - (2) Is that which Jesus identified as “signs” following baptized believers in Mk.16:17,18.
- b. V.39 is further assurance and confirmation of God’s prophetic promise to “pour out of his Spirit” upon his “servants,” (Vv.17,18): “For the promise is unto you, and to...”
 - (1) “To you”: You Jewish baptized believers.
 - (2) “To your children” – Jewish children who become baptized believers. (But not to “your grandchildren,” which is in harmony with the limited time period of the spiritual gifts; 2 generations at the most).
 - (3) To them who are “afar off;” that is, Gentiles. Cf. Eph.2:13,17.
 - (4) To “even as many as the Lord shall call.” Cf. Ac.13:2; 16:10.
3. For more than one reason the word “call” of Ac.2:39, in the expression “as many as the Lord shall call”, is not referring to being called to salvation by the gospel of Christ.
 - a. Neither the context nor the meaning of the original Gr. term translated “call” in V.39 will allow it.
 - b. The promise of V.39 is referring to V.38b, and “the gift of the Holy Spirit,” and the “pouring out of the Spirit” of Vv.17,18, the spiritual gift to “prophesy”, etc., and is a promise to baptized believers, to those already saved.
 - c. Thus the call of V.39 is limited; it has another purpose in mind; to those called for a different purpose than to be saved; it is only to “as many as the Lord our God shall call.”
 - d. The orig. Gr. term for “call” in V.39:
 - (1) Is not from the verb “call” (the Gr. term “kaleo) of 2Th.2:13,14, referring to sinners being called to salvation by the gospel.
 - (2) Is from the Gr. term “proskaleomai, meaning “to invite, to call to the performance of a thing; to appoint,” Ac.2:39; 13:2;16:10.” – *Analytical Greek Lexicon*, Harper, 35,349.

- e. In Ac.13:2, the Holy Spirit “called” or “appointed” Paul and Barnabas to preach the gospel to the Gentile world. Cf. 13:4; 14:26,27.
- f. In Ac.16:10, the Lord “called” or “appointed” Paul and Luke to preach the gospel in Macedonia; they received the “Macedonian Call.” (called to the performance of a thing, or appointed to it).
- g. In Ac.2:39 the same word for “call” is used with the same meaning and refers to God’s appointment of some in the 1st Century to receive the spiritual gifts of Vv.17,18 and V.38 for use in the work of the infant church and received by the laying on of the apostles hands.
 - (1) Not all believers were so called or appointed.
 - (2) Only “as many as” – a part of the whole.
 - (3) Cf. Rom.6:3 for the expression “as many as” signifying its limited use. Explain in context.

III CONCLUSION

(With this contextual examination of Ac.2, we have, based on Peter’s sermon, established my proposition that: “Ac.2:38 is the summation and fulfillment of God’s two-fold prophetic promise of Joel 2:28-32”. Now re-emphasized and summarized in the following A,B,C manner:

A:-- Vv16-21, PETER’S INSPIRED “THIS IS THAT,” AFFIRMING THE EVENTS OF PENTECOST ARE IN FULFILLMENT OF GOD’S TWO-FOLD PROPHETIC PROMISE IN JOEL 2:28-32.

B:-- Vv.22-36, PETER’S FOUR-FOLD ARGUMENT ESTABLISHING HIS PROPOSITION THAT JESUS OF NAZARETH IS THE CHRIST, AND THE LORD, THEY MUST CALL ON TO BE THE RECIPIENT OF GOD’S TWO-FOLD PROPHETIC PROMISE OF Ac.2:17-21.

C:-- Vv.37-39, PETER’S ANSWER TO THEIR QUESTION EXPLAINING HOW THEY ARE TO CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD TO BE SAVED AND THEN BE THE RECIPIENT OF THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WHICH IS PROMISED TO BOTH JEW AND GENTILE, AS PER GOD’S PROPHETIC PROMISE OF JOEL 2:28, AS QUOTED AND APPLIED IN AC.2:17,18.