

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

NOTES 6

ACTS 2:14-21

FORMER ADVENTIST FELLOWSHIP BIBLE STUDY

The disciples have just received the Holy Spirit and have spoken in tongues they did not know. The international crowd gathered to observe this miracle heard the gospel in their own languages as the Holy Spirit reversed the curse of Babel in this first harvest of born-again members of the body of Christ. Peter then steps forward and began the first evangelistic sermon ever preached in the history of the church.

Peter refers to Joel's prophecy in Joel 2 and says what is happening right then is the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy, when God would pour out His Spirit on His people, and they would have visions and dreams and there would be signs and wonders to announce the Day of the Lord. How do we know whether Peter was subjectively interpreting Joel or actually revealing previously unrevealed truth?

Before His crucifixion, Jesus said He would send the Holy Spirit to His disciples. He explained further the things the Holy Spirit would do. He would "convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment" and would guide the disciples as well as all God's people into all truth, declaring "the things that are to come" (John 16:4-15).

Peter's interpretation of Joel's prophecy could not have been revealed before Pentecost because the indwelling Holy Spirit had not yet been given. Moreover, the very Holy Spirit that had just come upon Peter was revealing truth to him, just as Jesus had said.

Moreover, when Peter had proclaimed Jesus to be the Son of God in Caesarea Philippi, Jesus had responded that God had revealed that truth to him. He further told Peter that He was giving him the keys of the kingdom, that upon his declaration of His deity, Jesus would build His church (Matthew 16:13-20). In this first evangelistic sermon on the Day of Pentecost, Peter began carrying out the work and commission Jesus had already assigned him, to lay the foundation of the newly birthed church.

Just before He returned to heaven, Jesus had told the disciples that the Holy Spirit would baptize them soon (Acts 1:4-8). This phenomenon on the Day of Pentecost, coming as it did with the sound of wind and tongues of fire, clearly was the event Jesus told them to expect, and the Spirit revealed to Peter that this miracle fulfilled Joel's prophecy of the Holy Spirit in the last days.

Peter wrote later, in his second epistle, the truth about Scripture and its meaning. "No prophecy of Scripture," he wrote, "comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:20-21). Peter knew the truth of these words from his own experience.

Finally, we have Paul's words to Timothy in one of the last epistles he wrote before his death: "You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love,

my steadfastness, my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work."

Paul affirms the divine origin of the Old Testament Scripture here. Moreover, he declares that "all Scripture is breathed out by God". Peter identifies Paul's writings as Scripture in 2 Peter 3:16. God gave the people He appointed to write Scripture His words. By definition, Scripture is not the musings of men. It is breathed out by God and preserved and protected. When Peter identified the phenomenon of Pentecost as being the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy, that insight was the result of the Holy Spirit informing Peter of God's eternal purpose and faithfulness. Peter was demonstrating what Jesus had said would happen when the Holy Spirit came: "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come."

LAST DAYS

Peter identified Joel's prophecy as being fulfilled in "the last days". Many different Bible writers referred to the "last days", and we need to understand what those days are. Isaiah prophecies about the "latter day", saying the house of the Lord will "be established as the highest of the mountains...and all the nations shall flow to it." People will stream to it to learn His ways. "For out of Zion shall go the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples." He further describes people changing their weapons into farming tools and says, "nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore" (Is. 2:2-4).

This prophecy describes a time when God reigns on earth, people come from all over to hear Him and learn from Him, and nations are at peace. This scenario has not yet been realized on earth; nevertheless, it does not seem to describe the new heaven and the new earth, either.

Hosea also describes a time when Israel, who has been “many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or pillar, without ephod or household gods,” will return and seek the “Lord their God, and David their king, and they shall come unafraid to the Lord and to his goodness in the latter days” (Hos. 3:4-5).

Again, this prophecy describes a spiritual awakening of Israel when they will seek God and the promised King in the line of David. After a long time of disorganization, they will again fear God.

Micah also delivers a prophecy very similar to Isaiah’s, when, in the latter days, the mountain of the Lord will be the highest of the mountains. People and nations will flow to it to learn from the God of Jacob; the law will go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem (Micah 4:1-2).

Now, however, in Acts 2, Peter becomes more precise in identifying the timing of the “last days”. He identifies the miracle of the indwelling, empowering Holy Spirit as the fulfillment of God’s promise to pour out His Spirit in the last days. Moreover, in 1 Peter 1:17-21, Peter also speaks of the Lord Jesus and reminds his exiled Jewish Christian readers that they were ransomed from futility by “the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you who through him are believers in God.”

Peter is identifying the last days as having begun with the incarnation of the Lord Jesus. He was foreknown before the foundation of the world—in other words, His incarnation was not an afterthought or a “Plan B” designed to deal with sin. But He was revealed, made manifest, in the “last times”. Jesus was the culmination of all God’s prophecy and of the history of the world.

The author of Hebrews likewise identifies the last days as the days beginning with the incarnate Christ, saying that instead of God speaking as He had through prophets, “in these last days he has spoken to us by His Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world” (Heb. 1:1-4).

Paul also wrote to Timothy that “in the last days there will come times of difficulty,” and he lists the sorts of sins that will define humanity on a large scale: lovers of self and money, pride, arrogant, abusiveness, disobedience to parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, no self-control, brutality, having the appearance of godliness but denying its power. Paul is warning Timothy of these things—but he is also warning the church through the ages (2 Tim. 3:1-5). The last days had already begun when Paul was writing to Timothy.

John also wrote about the last days: “Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us” (1 John 2:18-19).

The New Testament writers identified the last days as having begun with the incarnation of the Lord Jesus. His appearing, His sacrifice for sin, His victory over death, and His inauguration of the new birth made possible by opening the way for us to directly approach God has ushered in the last days. The utopian scenarios described in the Old Testament are still to be fulfilled, but those prophecies are linked to the last days. Jesus Himself is the author of the Last Days, and all the promises of God connected to “last days” are certain to be fulfilled because they are brought about by the Lord Jesus.

Time to God is irrelevant. God began a new thing when He sent Jesus to earth. The coming of Christ has set in motion events that could not have happened before He came, and even though some of those promises have not yet been realized, they are as certain as was His birth, death, and resurrection. The “last days” may look to us like

millennia, but to God, a thousand days are as a year. In Christ all God’s promises are “yes” (2 Cor. 1:20).

We are not looking for anyone else to fulfill God’s promises. He has come! Jesus is completing the promises for the Last Days exactly on schedule according to God’s plan laid from before the foundation of the earth.

FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT

On that singular Day of Pentecost, the hecklers in the crowd accused the apostles and others who were filled with the Spirit of drunkenness. Peter set them straight, reminding them (because they were Jewish and knew the prophecies) that Joel had talked about this very day when God would pour out His Spirit on His people. The unexpected component to the Spirit’s initial manifestation was the speaking in tongues that marked God’s reversal of the curse of Babel. The Spirit gave the ability to transcend ethnic and racial barriers.

Ephesians 5:18 also contrasts drunkenness with being Spirit-filled: “And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,” Paul writes. Again in Romans 13:13-14 he contrasts sensual indulgence with putting on Christ: “Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.”

There is in these verses both a sense of comparison and of contrast. The comparison seems to be behavior that is outside the normal range of natural man—for example, the speaking in tongues which the speakers did not know—a sound which sounded like babbling to those who did not “have ears to hear”.

The contrast, however, between being filled with the Spirit and being drunk is that when one is Spirit-filled, he is not indulging the flesh. Drunkenness, however, produces self-indulgent behavior that expresses itself without the modifying influence of rational thought or analysis. Being Spirit-filled may result in behavior not natural to a person, but it is not impulse-driven. It is God-empowered, and the Spirit-filled person is not out of control of himself. He is submitted to God, but his rational mind is not numbed.

Drunkenness is entirely “flesh”. Being Spirit-filled is the antithesis of being drunk; the person surrenders his desires and impulses to the Lord Jesus, and he or she does things that are not “natural” to him. They are from God—and they are not indulging the person’s natural desires but honoring God and accomplishing His purposes.

Again in 1 Corinthians 5:11-13 Paul says, “But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one. For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? God judges those outside. “Purge the evil person from among you.”

In this passage Paul condemns habitual drunkenness and instructs that a drunkard, along with the immoral, the idolater, revilers, and swindlers, is to be put out of fellowship with the church. Such a person’s influence is evil, and a drunkard is not submitted to God but to himself and his own impulses. He or she disrupts a congregation, and God’s people are never to condone sinful self-indulgence, even passively, by ignoring it in their midst.

To the Thessalonians Paul wrote that we are children of light, not of dark. We are to be sober, not indulging in the drunken behavior that typifies the dark. Instead, “since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation” (1 Thess. 5:4-8).

Further, Paul's instruction to Titus about the qualifications for an elder, include the mandate that they could not be open "to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined" (Titus 1:6-8).

God's people are to be submitted to the Lord Jesus and under the direction of the Holy Spirit. This humility means a person has chosen to surrender his own desires and impulses and natural penchant for indulgence to God, allowing Him to give him unnatural discipline and integrity. Left to our own decisions, we would all be impulse-driven. Even our self-discipline would reflect our underlying desire for accomplishment or control. When we are under the Spirit's control, however, we surrender our natural sense of what is acceptable and allow God to make us useful for His purposes. We cannot see God's purposes; we are to submit to Him and His leading.

The contrast and answer to drunkenness is being Spirit-filled. While both lead a person into behaviors they would not normally do if under the control of their conscious mind, the consequences are vastly different. Alcohol leads a person into the impulses of the natural, unregenerate heart. The Holy Spirit takes one out of oneself and transforms a person into God's man or woman, performing His work in a broken world. This sort of transformed work is not "natural" but reflects the sovereign God who is over all.

EGW IN VIEW?

Many of us were taught that the passage in Joel which Peter quotes in Acts 2:17-21 is the evidence for Ellen White's prophetic "gift". The details in the passage, however, deny this possibility. In the first place, the passage states that God's Spirit would be poured out on all His people, and they would speak for Him. Further, the passage declares that there would be wonders in the sky and on the earth, "blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke, 'The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before the great and glorious day of the Lord shall come.'"

Ellen White's prophetic "gift" fulfills none of these signs. The typical Adventist interpretation of Acts 2, that Pentecost was the "former rain" and that we're expecting a fuller outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the last days, belies the clear words of Peter when he says, "this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel."

We have to see Pentecost as fulfilling Joel's prophecy. We cannot assign Pentecost with a lesser meaning and see it as a preliminary act of God leading up to a greater fulfillment in the person of Ellen White and the "remnant church". We have to take the words of Scripture at face value and believe they tell us the truth.

While it is possible that there may be a future fulfillment of this prophecy as well, perhaps when Israel is "unhardened" and returns to the Lord as Paul prophesies in Romans 11, still we have to understand Pentecost to be the prophetic moment Peter said it was. Pentecost marked the beginning of something completely new, and it was the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy of God's miraculous gift of His Spirit in the last days.

SIGNS AND THE DAY OF THE LORD

Many of us also learned that the "dark day" and the "falling stars" happened in the late 18th and early 19th centuries and there-

fore, we don't have to look any further for the fulfillment of these signs. The Bible, however, tells us something different.

In Matthew 24:27-31 Jesus said, "Immediately "after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken," and immediately afterward the "sign of the Son of Man" would appear in heaven. While we still have to experience these events, there is no reason to suppose Jesus was not speaking literally about signs in the heavens preceding and signaling His return.

Mark also records Jesus saying there would be heavenly signs before His return: "But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory" (Mk. 13:24-26).

Isaiah also prophesied that the "day of the Lord" would come with heavenly signs: "For the stars of the heavens and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be dark at its rising, and the moon will not shed its light" (Is. 13:9-11). Then, God says, He will punish the world for evil and iniquity and "lay low the pompous pride of the ruthless."

Revelation echoes these prophecies. In Revelation 16:12-17 John records, "I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, calling to the mountains and rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?'"

The Bible clearly identifies signs in the heavens with the coming of the Day of the Lord. The dark day and falling stars of the 18th and 19th centuries did not coincide either with each other or with the coming of Jesus. These events cannot be the fulfillment of the Bible's prophecies about signs marking Jesus' coming, either His first advent or His second.

The Bible clearly says there will be signs and wonders in heaven and on earth. Adventists have taken the Millerite's and early Adventists' explanation that these events occurred during their day and several years before as their "final word" on the subject. They validate their 1844 "sanctuary doctrine" with the New England meteor shower of 1833 and the solar eclipse of the late 18th century. Yet the 1844 "event" cannot be substantiated, either by history or the Bible. Moreover, the widely disparate events they claim marked this date did not notify the world of a divine appearance. The "dark day" and the "falling stars" did not coincide with each other, much less "the day of the Lord".

Other people question whether signs in the heavens are actually literal events. The Bible, however, clearly states that there will be signs in the heavens to mark God's intervention in history. Genesis 1:14, for example, says, "And God said, 'Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. Ad let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years.'" From the earliest account of creation, the Bible states that the sun, moon, and stars are for signs. In fact, "signs" is the first function listed for the heavenly bodies, followed by "seasons" and "days and years". We cannot dismiss this statement as merely poetic or metaphorical. God created the heavenly bodies for "signs" as well as for the marking of seasons

and time. We know the marking of seasons and time is literal, yet we tend to pass over the clear statement that they are for “signs”.

Jeremiah 10:2 also says, “Thus says the Lord, ‘Learn not the way of the nations, nor be dismayed at the signs of the heavens because the nations are dismayed at them. . .’” In other words, Jeremiah is also validating the function of the heavenly bodies as “sign-givers”. The unbelieving nations will be afraid, he says, but those who believe God should not fear. God is in charge of the stars, and He created them for signs to signal His purposes.

Jesus Himself said, “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, 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.”

We can expect that after the coming tribulation, immediately preceding the return of Jesus, the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall. Moreover, Revelation 6:12-17 states, as quoted above, that when the sixth seal was opened in John’s vision, the sun became black, the moon turned to blood, the stars fell, the sky vanished, every mountain and island was removed, and all the nations of the earth mourned and recognized that the “great day of their wrath [the Father and the Lamb] has come.”

From these texts we see that we can expect signs immediately preceding the return of Jesus as well as immediately before the day of God’s judgment on the wicked. We know that the book of Matthew states there were signs in the sky when Jesus was born and when Jesus died; a star appeared that signaled to the wise men that a King had been born to the Jews, and the day Jesus died, the sun was darkened and a giant earthquake broke open the tombs of many righteous people. Furthermore, astronomy software suggests that also on the day Jesus died, there was a lunar eclipse—a heavenly event that was anciently called a “blood moon” because the effect of the eclipse is to cause the moon to glow a dark red because of the red-shift of the light from the sun that is deflected by the earth. (See www.starofbethlehem.net.)

We can be confident that God keeps His word, and what He says, will happen. We can know that the signs that accompanied Jesus’ birth and death were fulfillments of prophecy and were God’s own marks of His singular intervention in history. We can also be certain that the signs the Bible states will occur to mark His return and His judgment will also be real.

REAL SIGNS

The account of creation includes God’s revelation of the fact that He intended to reveal signs of His divine acts by means of heavenly manifestations. Genesis 1:14 records the fourth day of creation week when God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years.” From the moment of His creation of the stars, sun, and moon, God intended to reveal Himself through celestial events.

Jeremiah 10:2 further says, “Thus says the Lord: ‘Learn not the way of the nations, nor be dismayed at the signs of the heavens because the nations are dismayed at them. . .’” In other words, God was telling Jeremiah that he sends signs in the heavens marking His singular acts in history. Israel, His own people, were not to be frightened by His signs as the unbelieving nations would be. God had told His people that He would send such signs, and they were to expect and recognize them as signs from the Lord.

We already know God sent signs in the sky to mark the birth of Jesus and to mark the death of His Son. Additionally, Jesus defined the occurrence of future signs even more clearly. In Matthew 24:29-30 He says, “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, 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.”

In Revelation 6:12-17, John echoes Jesus’ words when he records his vision: “When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, calling to the mountains and rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?’”

As our generations pass with no singular events happening in our sky, we tend to think these biblical statements are metaphors or just “poetic language”. God told us, however, that He created the heavenly bodies for signs as well as for the markers of seasons and time. We can expect that the God of creation has authority over the forces of nature, even of astrophysics, and that He who established the cycles and equations that keep the heavenly bodies in place and “on time” has also written into their structure the signs that announce His intervention in history at the exact times He prepared in advance for them to occur.

CALLING ON THE LORD

Acts 2:14-21 ends with this quotation from Joel 2, “And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Peter was making the point that at Pentecost, God fulfilled the prophecy He gave to Joel, that He would pour out His Spirit, send signs and wonders in heaven, that the day of the Lord would come, and everyone who called on God would be saved. Peter is showing that this prophecy was fulfilled in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus and was being culminated right then at the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.

Today, the idea of calling on the name of the Lord has been diluted in many circles, and some people think a verbal formula is sufficient to effect salvation. Yet the Bible is clear that salvation is not about the repetition of mere words.

Paul also quotes this same prophecy from Joel in Romans 10. This passage falls in the middle of Paul’s anguish for his Jewish brothers to be saved and his revelation that the day is coming when God will soften their hearts again and re-graft them into His olive tree if they do not persist in unbelief. In Romans 10:8-10 Paul quotes Deuteronomy and enlarges on it: “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.”

The heart must bow before the Lord Jesus and believe; it is not “saving faith” merely to say a proper formula. Jesus said that many

would say to Him, “Lord, Lord,” but they would not all enter the kingdom. They will confess to doing miracles and wonders in His name, but Jesus will say to them, “I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness” (Matthew 7:21-26). It is only those whom Jesus “knows”—a personal term connoting the oneness of sexual intimacy—who will be saved. As Jesus told Nicodemus, we must be born again—born of the Spirit in order to see the kingdom of heaven. He must indwell us, and we must be hidden in Him.

When the Philippian jailor asked Paul and Silas what he must do to be saved, they replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household” (Acts 16:31).

We must each bow before Jesus, acknowledging our helpless sinfulness, repenting of sin, and believing that Jesus died for our sin. We must give up our control and desire to manage our own worthiness and submit to Jesus for His completed work on our behalf. We are helpless to save ourselves; repeating words is not a means of salvation. When we believe in our hearts, however, that Jesus died and rose to save us from ourselves, we will be able to confess with our

mouths that He is Lord! Our confession will reflect the new heart He has given us.

MEDITATION

Ask God to show you what is real. Ask Him to reveal to you the truth of His word and to give you the willingness to let go of your past understandings and to be transformed by truth. Ask Him to become more real to you than your past perceptions of reality. Ask Him to take from you your fear of His Spirit and your distrust of His word and to fill your heart with His peace, power, and joy. Ask Him to make you willing to know what is real and to live your life by the truth of His word.

The things God has planned for you are greater than anything you can ask or imagine. He abounds in riches for all those who call on Him—and all who call on His name will be saved (Romans 10:12-13). He is faithful!

STUDY

The disciples had just received the Holy Spirit and had spoken in tongues to the international crowd gathered to witness this first outpouring of God's Spirit with power on men and women. In Acts 2:14-22, Peter steps forward and begins the first evangelistic sermon ever preached in the history of the church.

- 1. In verses 14-16, Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit and the wisdom of God, explains the unprecedented phenomenon taking place: Judean Jews speaking foreign tongues they had never learned. He identifies this event as the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy in Joel 2. How do we know Peter was revealing truth and not subjectively assigning an interpretation to an event?**

John 16:4-15 _____

Matthew 16:13-20 _____

Acts 1:4-8 _____

2 Peter 1:16-21 _____

2 Timothy 3:10-16 _____

- 2. Read Joel 2:28-32, the passage Peter quotes. What are the last days?**

Isaiah 2:2-4 _____

Hosea 3:4-5 _____

Micah 4:1-2 _____

1 Peter 1:17-20 _____

Hebrews 1:1-4 _____

2 Timothy 3:1-5 _____

1 John 2:18-19 _____

- 3. What other places in the Bible contrast being filled with the Spirit and being filled with wine, and what do these contrasts suggest are the similarities and essential differences between the two phenomena?**

Ephesians 5:18 _____

Romans 13:13-14 _____

1 Corinthians 5:11-13 _____

1 Thessalonians 5:4-8 _____

Titus 1:5-8 _____

4. Many of us have heard this passage used to validate the role of Ellen G. White as the fulfillment of God’s promise to send visions and dreams in the last days. What details in verses 17-21 show that God had something other than Ellen White in mind?

5. Other places in Scripture refer also to the wonders and signs in the sky and on the earth that precede the “day of the Lord”. May of us learned that these events have already taken place. When does the Bible suggest they ultimately take place?

Matthew 24:27-31 _____

Isaiah 13:9-11 _____

Mark 13:24-27 _____

Revelation 6:12-17 _____

6. How do we know that we can expect literal signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, that these words are not merely figurative language?

Genesis 1:14 _____

Jeremiah 10:2 _____

Matthew 24:29-30 _____

Revelation 6:12-17 _____

7. How do we know that “calling on the Lord” must include more than being able to mouth the words—and what more than words does it require to be saved?

Matthew 7:21-26 _____

Acts 16:30-31 _____

Romans 10:8-10 _____

MEDITATE

How did you originally understand Peter’s use of Joel 2 to explain Pentecost? How does your understanding of the Holy Spirit’s work differ now from the your understanding in the past? How has your understanding of the reliability of Scripture changed as you have come to know Jesus personally? Ask God to reveal the truth to you, to teach you deeply from His word and to become more real to you than your fears or your past perception of reality. Ask Him to plant you firmly in the truth and reality of His word and of His own Person and presence.

“He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.” 1 Peter 2:24-25, NIV