

The Salvation Message, from Apostle Peter

I've recently (late 2015) been preaching through Matthew chapter 23. Towards the end of the chapter I was led to some other texts in the New Testament that were complimentary to Matthew 23. I've been studying a lot about the death of the Messiah, and who was responsible for the murder of the Messiah. This led me to texts like 1 Thessalonians 2:13-16, and several texts in the book of the Acts of the Apostles, specifically Acts 2-3.

While studying Acts 2-3 I began to notice something I'd never noticed before so plainly: the salvation message that Peter preaches to the men of Israel in both the second and third chapters of the book. Let me explain by giving just a brief background.

I believe that Yeshua is the promised Messiah of the Hebrew Scriptures, Yahweh's Son, virgin born, with a full measure of Yahweh's Spirit inside of him, but, I do not believe in the Trinity, and I do not believe Yeshua is Yahweh (Jesus is God). Sometimes, people wrongly accuse me (and others) of believing that Yeshua was "just a man," or "just a prophet." Of course I do believe Yeshua is a man (Acts 5:31), and a prophet (Matthew 13:57), but I'd never say (nor have I ever believed) he was "just a man" or "just a prophet." He is Yahweh's unique Son. Yahweh really does have a Son. As the famous verse of John 3:16 tells us, Yahweh loved the world in this way - He gave His only begotten Son.

When people find out you do not believe that Yeshua is Yahweh, or that you do not believe in the Trinity, they question your salvation. I should say that *some people* question your salvation, other people condemn you straight to Gehenna (hell), never to return. I've had it happen several times in conversation with others, but that's enough background to build up to my main reason for writing this study.

In Acts 2 and 3 we have two salvation sermons preached by the Apostle Peter. Both were preached shortly after Yeshua went to heaven (Acts 1:9-11), and the man who preached them (Peter) was a direct disciple (student) of Yeshua. Peter knew Yeshua personally. He walked with him, and was as familiar with him as any man could have been. Peter had earlier been given the keys to the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 16:13-19), just after he spoke the revelation the Father gave to him: that Yeshua was the Christ, the Son of the living God.¹

ACTS 2

In both Acts 2 and 3 Peter preached to the men of Israel. I'll begin with Acts 2.

Acts 2:22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Yeshua of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know.

¹ I don't normally prefer to use the English title God in reference to Yahweh. I believe it has shady origins. However, I've chosen to retain it in much of this article for the purpose of clarity and familiarity. For more information, you may visit my website and listen to the 3-part audio discussion: "God, Gawd, Yahweh."

Notice the audience: the men of Israel. These men of Israel were Judahite men, dwelling in Jerusalem, because the Day of Pentecost was upon them (Acts 2:1, 5). Peter tells them to listen to what he is saying, and he begins by speaking of Yeshua of Nazareth, a man approved of God (Yahweh) by miracles and signs that God did, through him, among them.

Those of you familiar with Acts 2 already realize that this is a salvation message being given by Peter. If you aren't familiar with it, take the time to read slowly through Acts 2:22-40, maybe even 3 or 4 times, to get the feel of the text.

Here in a salvation message, Peter begins² by talking about how Yeshua was a man approved of God. Think about it. This is a point that Peter brings out to the men of Israel - *in a salvation message*. Peter speaks of how God performed great and mighty signs *through this man* Yeshua. Yahweh did these miracles, but the way Yahweh did them was through the man, Yeshua of Nazareth.³

Acts 2:23-24 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

Peter goes on to talk about how that Yeshua was delivered up to die by the counsel and foreknowledge of God (Yahweh), but it was "ye" (the men of Israel, vs. 22) that crucified him by wicked hands. The wicked or lawless hands could either be their own hands, or it could be a reference to the hands of the Roman government. Either way, it is the men of Israel who were responsible for crucifying Yeshua. They were the ones who cried out, "Crucify him!" (Matthew 27:15-26)

But, Yahweh raised up Yeshua from death. Or as Christians today would say, "God raised Jesus from death."

Now, one would think that if the "doctrine of the Trinity," or the belief that "Yeshua really is Yahweh," is of such importance, Peter would have centered in on one of those here. I mean, he is preaching a message of *salvation*, a message of *repentance* to the men

² Peter began his speech in Acts 2:14 when he stood up to explain what was taking place that day concerning the gift of languages being poured out upon the apostles (and possibly others believing Israelites in attendance). In verses 17-21 Peter quotes from the book of the prophet Joel (2:28-32), showing that what was taking place right then was the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy. Peter ends his quotation with the proclamation from Joel that "whoever calls on the name of Yahweh will be saved." Peter then begins his sermon to explain what that means. Calling on the name of Yahweh doesn't mean just saying, "Yahweh," it means receiving the means of salvation that Yahweh has sent. Peter's sermon in Acts 2:22-40 explains this.

³ I find it disturbing that in many of the articles I've read over the years about the identity of Yeshua, the authors often describe Yeshua as "the God-man." Such a term is never used of Yeshua in either the Old Testament or the New Testament, much less used with the connotations of today's authors or commentators. Peter rather says that Yeshua was "a man approved of God." If we have a problem with Yeshua being called a man in this salvation message, we have a problem with the Apostle Peter, a direct and appointed Apostle of Yeshua.

of Israel. *They need to hear what is of utmost importance.* But Peter is silent about a Trinity. Peter doesn't utter one word that would lead us to believe that Yeshua is Yahweh. Peter instead drives home the point about Yeshua being a man approved of God, and a man by whom God performed great miracles. Peter also centers upon how they (the men of Israel) had crucified Yeshua (according to Yahweh's plan and counsel), but Yahweh raised Yeshua from the dead.

Acts 2:25-28 For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw Yahweh always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.

What we have next is quite interesting from Peter. He begins to quote an Old Testament passage from the prophet David, written in Psalm 16. Peter will go on to explain his reasons for doing so, but let me explain it briefly before quoting him.

This text from David is a prophecy that sounds like it's about David. If you go back and read Psalm 16, you will read David speaking about himself. David says that "Yahweh is at *my* right hand," That's a reference to David's right hand. David says, "Therefore did *my* heart rejoice, and *my* tongue was glad." That's a reference to David's heart and David's tongue. David says, "You will not leave *my* soul in hell (the grave)." That's a reference to David's soul.

But notice how *Peter* interprets this Psalm of David.

Acts 2:29-32 Men *and* brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of the Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Yeshua hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.

Peter begins by saying that David is dead, buried, and everyone knows where his grave is. So how could David have been talking about himself back in the 16th Psalm? Peter explains this by mentioning that David was a prophet, and that Yahweh had sworn to David that *from his progeny* would come the Anointed One. David saw this prophetically beforehand and thus spoke of the resurrection of Yeshua - *that Yeshua's soul was not left in the grave.* Verse 32 explains this by saying that God raised up Yeshua, and everyone there listening to Peter, was a witness to that resurrection.

The understanding of Psalm 16 is to put Yeshua of Nazareth in the place of David. When David speaks, it is actually prophetic of Yeshua, the descendant of David. When David says, "I foresaw Yahweh always before my face," that is prophetically *Yeshua saying*, "I foresaw Yahweh always before my face." When David says, "You will not leave my soul in the grave," that is prophetically *Yeshua saying* "You will not leave my soul in the grave." David was prophesying about the resurrection of Yeshua (his descendant) back in Psalm 16.

Take note that this is the point that Peter continues to drive home: the *resurrection* of Yeshua. Peter sees it important to center in on a Davidic prophecy about Yeshua's resurrection, in a salvation message he is preaching that day, to the men of Israel. He has still mentioned nothing about Yeshua really being Yahweh, or a Trinity.

Acts 2:33-35 Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, Yahweh said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool.

Peter now mentions that Yeshua has been exalted to the right hand of God, and he's received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father, which he now has the authority to pour out upon those he chooses. *Yeshua* was pouring out the Spirit upon the apostles in Acts 2, because he now had the authority to do so. Notice how Yeshua is mentioned as different or separate from the words "God" and "Father." Notice how Yeshua is not referred to as God, but he has been exalted *to the right hand* of God.

Then Peter brings up David again, but he is continuing to point out that David prophetically spoke about Yeshua in the Psalms. David is not the one whom Yahweh raised from the dead, or the one whom Yahweh allowed to ascend into heaven. We know this because it was David himself that said, "Yahweh said unto my Lord."

Acts 2:34b-35 is a quotation from Psalm 110:1. There David is speaking, and he speaks of Yahweh (God) speaking something to his (David's) Lord. Here, David is recognizing Yahweh (one person) talking to "my Lord" (another person). What Yahweh says to David's Lord is this: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." This shows that not only are two persons involved, but that one (Yahweh) is superior to the other (David's Lord). Yahweh is the one inviting David's Lord to sit at his right hand. Yahweh is the one who will make this Lord's enemies to be a footstool underneath his feet.

To be at the right hand of Yahweh is a very prestigious position. I'd say it is the second highest position in all the universe, but it is still not the position of Father Yahweh.

This Lord that Yahweh is speaking to in Psalm 110:1 is Yeshua. That's Peter's point. David is not ascended into the heavens, his grave was with them in that day. It was rather

David's descendant, Yeshua of Nazareth, that ascended into the heavens, being invited to sit at the right hand of Yahweh. This explains the next verse.

Acts 2:36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Yeshua, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

Peter has been preaching to the men of Israel this entire time (vs. 22), and therefore he ends his sermon by saying "let all the house of Israel know for sure." What does he want the house of Israel to know for certain? He tells us: that God (Yahweh) hath made this Yeshua, whom you (the men of Israel) crucified, both Lord and Christ.

Yahweh made Yeshua Lord and Christ. Had Yahweh not *made* Yeshua Lord and Christ, he would not *be* Lord and Christ. The word Lord here is explained by the verses we just went over. Yahweh spoke to David's *Lord* or Master (Psalm 110:1). The word *Christ* is the Greek translation of its Hebrew counterpart, *Messiah*, meaning "anointed one." Yahweh made Yeshua the (1) Lord of David, and (2) the Anointed One.

Acts 2:37 Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?

When *they* heard this. When *who* heard this? None other than the men of Israel Peter has been preaching to this entire time.

When they heard *this*. When they heard *what*? The salvation message about how Yeshua was a man approved of God, and resurrected by God, after they had crucified him. When they heard that Yeshua was the Lord of David that ascended into heaven, after being invited by Yahweh to sit at His right hand.

This is what the men of Israel heard that day, and this is what pricked their hearts, making them ask the question, "What do we need to do?"

This is extremely important. This is the salvation message the men of Israel heard on the day of Pentecost, and this message had nothing to do with a Trinity, Yeshua being co-equal with Yahweh, Yeshua being of the same essence as Yahweh, or Yeshua actually and really being Father Yahweh. Peter proclaimed none of this in his salvation message, yet so many preachers today think that this must be proclaimed in their salvation messages.

Don't you think that if our salvation messages today do not sound like Peters, that we are the ones preaching error and not Peter?

Acts 2:38-40 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Yeshua the Christ for the remission of sins, and

ye 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 our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.

Peter tells the men of Israel to repent and baptized in the name of Yeshua the Messiah. Repent of what? These men are devout and are at the feast of Pentecost. If you examined their life you would see men who were Torah observant. However, they had rejected the one Yahweh sent to save them from their sins.

Number one, no matter how Torah observant a man is, he is still a sinner in need of salvation. We've all sinned, fallen short of Yahweh's glory, and are in need of His grace and mercy *daily*.

Number two, the main message of repentance here is that they were to repent of their sin of *rejecting the one whom Yahweh sent*. Yahweh sent Yeshua. Yahweh approved of Yeshua. Yahweh did miracles and wonders through this man Yeshua. Yahweh raised Yeshua from the dead. Yahweh invited Yeshua to His right hand. Yahweh made Yeshua both Lord and Christ. They had missed this, and they needed to repent of their rejecting him, and then be baptized in his name. Being baptized in the name of Yeshua the Messiah meant that at their baptism, they were confessing with their mouth that Yeshua is the promised Messiah, the Lord of David, Yahweh's Anointed One, the resurrected King.⁴

Peter continues in telling them that by doing this they will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the gift, and I believe salvation and forgiveness of sins is what is in view here. Through repentance and baptism, they would be forgiven and receive the salvation that comes through the one Yahweh sent, Yeshua of Nazareth. That was a promise to them, their children, and to those who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.⁵

Peter preached many other words that day. He continued to exhort the men of Israel to save themselves from the wicked generation alive at that time. But obviously, the most important words that Peter preached, are here recorded for us by Luke. They contain *nothing* about a Trinity or that Yeshua is actually Almighty Yahweh.

⁴ It is my contention that the modern day practice of a preacher saying some type of "baptismal formula" over the recipient is un-scriptural. In the book of Acts, we see the *baptizee* making the confession, not the baptizer. At one's baptism, the person would repent to Yahweh, for He was the One they had sinned against. They would then confess Yeshua as the Messiah, Son of Yahweh, for he was the one whom Yahweh sent to save His people from their sins. To receive Yeshua as Messiah automatically meant you received Yahweh as the Almighty, because Yeshua was *sent* by Yahweh. He had Yahweh's backing.

⁵ Which is likely a reference to the scattered lost sheep of Israel, throughout the nations, in the known world at that time. The Israelites who had been divorced by Yahweh and thus lost their name Isra-El, and became known as *the nations* or as is more commonly stated, *gentiles*. They are the ones "afar off" (Isaiah 43:1-6; 49:7-12; 57:13-19; Jeremiah 30:3-10; Daniel 9:7).

Again, if belief in a Trinity was an absolute necessity; if believing that Yeshua the Son is actually Yahweh God was an absolute necessity; why in the world did Peter not include any of that in his first salvation message to the men of Israel? The answer is obvious. Neither of those beliefs are a necessity. What is a necessity is that we believe Yeshua is the resurrected Lord of David, the promised Messiah, that sits at the right hand of Yahweh.

ACTS 3

The next salvation message recorded is found in Acts 3, and it is again preached by the Apostle Peter. Both Peter and John had visited the Jerusalem temple at the hour of prayer, and there was a man on the temple steps who had been lame since birth. He would sit there and beg for money because he was unable to work. Peter told the man he had no money to give him, but he did have something else to give him. Peter spoke to the man, "In the name of Yeshua the Messiah, rise up and walk!" Immediately the man began walking, leaping, and praising Yahweh for his healing! Everyone around them saw this take place and they were astonished because they had known the lame man for years! This was an amazing occurrence (the man had been lame for over 40 years, Acts 4:22). We pick up the story in verse 11.

Acts 3:11-12 And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering. And when Peter saw *it*, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?

Who is Peter speaking to here? Verse 12 tells us: the men of Israel (just like he had been speaking to them in Acts 2:22). There were likely some of the same men of Israel listening to him in Acts 3 that had already heard him in Acts 2. There were only 3,000 people added to belief in Yeshua in Acts 2 (vs. 41), so that meant the vast majority of the Israelites there on the day of Pentecost had not accepted Yeshua as the resurrected Messiah.

Peter asks the men of Israel why they are so amazed at the miracle, even though it is rather amazing! His point is that they (as disciples of Yeshua) did not have the power or holiness *in themselves* to make this lame man walk. They were operating under the power of Yeshua who had been *given* all authority from Yahweh (Matthew 28:18).

Acts 3:13-15 The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Yeshua; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let *him* go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.

Pay close attention to what Peter says here. Peter says that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob - the God of our fathers (the "our" stands for Peter, John, and the men of Israel listening) - *has glorified his Son Yeshua*,⁶ whom they had delivered up to death and denied in front of Pilate.

Do you see how Peter separates Yahweh and Yeshua again in this second salvation message? Yahweh is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,⁷ and Yahweh glorified his *Son Yeshua*. Yeshua is Yahweh's Son. Yahweh really does have a Son.

The men of Israel had denied Yeshua, and Peter says they instead asked for a murderer to be granted unto them. Peter is referencing what took place in Matthew 27, where there was a custom at the Passover for Pilate to release one of the prisoners of the Judahites. Pilate was wanting them to pick Yeshua who is called the Messiah for release. Instead they chose "Yeshua bar-abba," commonly known as Barabbus. Yeshua bar-abba was a notorious prisoner, a murderer, as Peter calls him here in verse 14.⁸

Peter goes on to say that they - the men of Israel - had killed the Prince of life, whom Yahweh raised from the dead. The Prince of life is Yeshua (the Son). The men of Israel denied Yeshua, shouting out "Crucify him!" They murdered the Prince of life. However, Yahweh vindicated him, by raising him from the dead.

⁶ Many Bibles translate Acts 3:13 as saying "hath glorified His servant Yeshua." The Greek word here is *pais*, and is even translated as "servant" in the KJV (Matthew 8:6, 8, 13; Acts 4:25). Can the Greek word *pais* be accurately translated into English as "son?" One example is found in John 4:46-51. Here a man pleads with Yeshua to heal his son. In verses 46-47 the common Greek word for son is used, *huios*. In verse 51 the word *pais* is used in reference to the man's son, showing that *huios* and *pais* are sometimes used interchangeably (see also Luke 9:37-43). It is not wrong to translate *pais* as "servant" in Acts 3:13 (Yeshua is the suffering servant of Yahweh in Isaiah 52-53), but neither is it wrong to translate *pais* as "son" in Acts 3:13. It may be that *pais* was chosen rather than *huios* because *pais* can cross the meaning of servant *and* son. The YLT puts this into English as "did glorify his child Jesus," while the NET in their footnote says, "The term servant has messianic connotations given the context of promise, the note of suffering, and the titles and functions noted in vv. 14-15."

⁷ The Old Testament speaks of the "God of Abraham" or "God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." (Genesis 26:24; 28:13; 31:42, 53; Exodus 3:6, 15-16; 4:5; 1 Kings 18:36; 1 Chronicles 29:18; 2 Chronicles 30:6; Psalm 47:9) Each time the God of Abraham speaks in these Old Testament texts, it is Yahweh and never Yeshua. Yeshua is the Son or Servant *of* the God of Abraham, per Acts 3:13. An interesting text in light of this is Luke 20:37 where Yeshua refers to Moses (at the burning bush) calling the Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Yeshua is speaking about Moses referencing Yahweh his Father.

⁸ Some ancient Greek manuscripts of Matthew 27 state this prisoners name as being the same as the Messiah. "Yeshua bar-abba" (or as people would say today "Jesus Barabbas"), meaning Yeshua son of A father. Other Greek manuscripts simply say "bar-abba." Such is not a name, but more of a surname. It is unlikely that later Christian scribes of the New Testament documents added the name of Yeshua/Jesus to the title Barabbas, seeing that is the more difficult reading of the two. What is more likely is that the text originally said "Yeshua bar-abba," but later Christian scribes felt uncomfortable with attributing the name Yeshua to the notorious criminal. The church-father Origen writes of this, saying that the name "Jesus" is not appropriate for a sinner (R.T. France's Commentary on Matthew's Gospel, NICNT, p.1046). What Origen (and others arguing as he) must not have realized, is that the name Yeshua was a common, first-century, Hebrew-Aramaic name. This understanding makes Pilate's question in Matthew 27:17 come to light: "Who is it you want me to release for you - Yeshua bar-abba, or Yeshua who is called Messiah?" Pilate adds "who is called Messiah" to differentiate *this* Yeshua from *that* Yeshua (bar-abba). The men of Judah picked Yeshua son of A father to be released, instead of Yeshua son of THE Father.

Acts 3:16 And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

Peter now points out to the men of Israel that through faith in the name of Yeshua the Messiah, the lame man was made able to walk.

Acts 3:17-19 And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did *it*, as *did* also your rulers. But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.

Peter tells his brethren (the men of Israel) that he knows they killed Yeshua in ignorance, just as the rulers (chief priests, elders) did. They didn't realize that Yeshua was the Prince of life. They didn't realize that Yeshua was the Messiah, the Son of Yahweh. Peter also goes on to mention how that this all had to take place because the prophecies of the suffering Messiah had to be fulfilled.

Then Peter tells them to repent. Tells who to repent? The men of Israel of course, just like in Acts 2. The men that Peter tells to repent are the men who are guilty of murdering Yeshua the Messiah. Peter tells them that they must repent of what they did to the Son of Yahweh so that their sins can be blotted out, and times of refreshing can come from the Lord (Yahweh).

Acts 3:20 And he shall send Yeshua the Christ, which before was preached unto you:

The "he" here is the "Lord" at the end of verse 19 - Yahweh. Yahweh shall send Yeshua the Messiah, which has been preached unto the men of Israel.

I have to point out again that *nothing* has been said about a Trinity in this second salvation message of Peter. There has also been *nothing* said about Yeshua actually being Yahweh wrapped in a robe of flesh, as the Oneness teach. These current day doctrines aren't found anywhere in these first two salvation sermons preached by the Apostle Peter. If these doctrines aren't found in these sermons from the earliest time of the Christian faith, why do people make such a fuss about including them in salvation messages today?

Acts 3:21-23 Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall Yahweh your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, *that* every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.

Remember, at the time Peter is preaching this, Yeshua had recently went to heaven to be with Yahweh. Heaven has to receive Yeshua, meaning welcome/keep him there, until the restitution that the prophets spoke about takes place.⁹ I think this is another way of saying what Yahweh had already said to Yeshua: "Come sit at my right hand UNTIL I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." When this happens, it will equal the times of the restitution of all things, and the heavens will no longer have to receive Yeshua, He will be sent back to earth in the same manner which he left (Acts 1:11).

Peter then quotes Moses (from Deuteronomy 18:15-19) where Moses spoke of Yahweh raising up a prophet like himself, from among the brethren. Peter is applying Moses' promise of the prophet to the person of Yeshua. Yeshua is the prophet like Moses that Yahweh raised up from among the brethren in Israel. He is the one who they must listen to. He is the one they must follow, like the children of Israel in the Old Covenant followed Moses. Yahweh sent Moses, and Yahweh sent Yeshua - a prophet like Moses. If the people of Israel didn't take heed to the words of Yeshua, they would be completely cut off from among the people.

Peter is still preaching to the men of Israel. Yeshua was sent by Yahweh to Israel, and if the Israelites didn't listen to Yeshua, Yahweh would cut them off completely. To be *cut off* has to mean that you are at one time *attached* to something.

Notice again the emphasis of Peter. No Trinity. No Oneness. No "God-man." Only Yahweh raising up His prophet from *among the brethren* in Israel that they must listen to. In this entire sermon, the emphasis has been upon Yeshua being Yahweh's Son and Messiah, the one Yahweh raised from the dead, and the one who the men of Israel must believe in and follow in order to be in a right relationship with Yahweh, because Yahweh sent Yeshua just like He sent Moses in the past.¹⁰

Acts 3:24-26 Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up his

⁹ It is not in the scope or purpose of this paper, but when one examines the holy prophets of old, it is most likely that the restitution of all things is a reference to the prophets speaking about the restoration of the two houses of Israel - Ephraim and Judah - the two sticks coming together as one, unified in the promised Messiah.

¹⁰ One verse shows that the people of Israel (who crossed through the Red Sea on dry land) did not only believe in Yahweh, but they also believed in His servant Moses. **Exodus 14:30-31** "Thus Yahweh saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore. And Israel saw that great work which Yahweh did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared Yahweh, and believed Yahweh, and his servant Moses." One action - *believed* - is ascribed to the people's response to both Yahweh *and* Yahweh's servant, Moses. It might even be argued that the phrase "the people feared Yahweh" could also apply to the last phrase "and Yahweh's servant Moses." The point is that in receiving and following Yahweh, you must follow who He sends as His emissary. To reject the sent one is to reject the sender. None of this means that Moses was Yahweh, or that Yeshua is Yahweh. Both are sent by Yahweh, but both had to be believed in and followed in their own times and respective ways.

Son Yeshua, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

Peter says that all the prophets have spoken beforehand about the days they were in (at that time), and he tells the men of Israel that they are children (descendants) of the prophets, and of the covenant that Yahweh made with Abraham and the fathers. They are the seed or offspring that all the kindreds of the earth would be blessed in.

Then Peter says, "Unto you first," and I think this points out that the men being preached to by Peter are *Judahite* men of Israel. The point is made in the New Testament that the good news about Yeshua goes to the Jew (Judahite) first, and also to the nations (Romans 1:6; 2:9-10).

Peter closes by saying that God (Yahweh), having raised up *His Son* Yeshua, sent him to bless you (the Judahite men of Israel), in turning away every one of you (the Judahite men of Israel) from his iniquities (evil). Yahweh sent His Son Yeshua so that the men of Israel could be forgiven for their transgressions. They would be forgiven - **IF** they repented of murdering Yeshua, and received Yeshua for who he was. Yahweh's Son, the prophet like Moses, and the resurrected Messiah.

CONCLUSION

I have labored this point over and over in this article, but in the conclusion it is pertinent that I do so once more. It makes no sense for someone to say "You *must* believe in the Trinity to be saved, " or "You *must* believe that Yeshua is Yahweh to be saved." The reason it makes no sense is because in these first two salvation sermons ever preached by the Apostle Peter - preached to the people who directly crucified Yeshua - he mentions **nothing** about either of those current-day doctrines, not even in early conception. Such doctrines were later developments within Christianity. They did begin to develop early on in the 3rd through 5th centuries A.D. but nonetheless they are later developments.¹¹ The pure salvation message is found right here in these early chapters of the book of Acts from the mouth of an Apostle himself; a direct pupil of our Lord and Savior Yeshua of Nazareth. Peter knew the truth. Peter preached the truth. The men of Israel who listened to Peter's preaching, and followed his instructions would be saved from the evil generation of their day. They would receive forgiveness of sins by believing that Yeshua was the Messiah, resurrected Lord of David, prophet like unto Moses, and Son of Yahweh.

~ *Matthew Janzen*

¹¹ I know this next statement is strong, but it is absurd to believe that a later doctrinal development is an essential belief of the Christian faith. Even if Trinitarians or Oneness proponents say that Peter (and others) had a fledgling understanding of Yeshua, they still must accept that Peter (and others) were saved with that fledgling understanding. Yahweh forbid that we throw people in hell for not believing something that took hundreds of years to be formulated by certain adherents to Christianity.

ADDENDUM - The Prayer in Acts 4

When I was first working on this study, I did not expect to include what I'm about to work through, but it keeps popping up in my mind in relation to Acts 2 and 3, and it's probably because it is found in Acts 4! I cannot stand to omit it, so I'm adding it here.

Peter and John have just faced the Judahite leadership of their day. They were being brought before the counsels and Sanhedrins just as Yeshua said would happen to them (Matthew 10:16-20). Peter boldly proclaimed the same salvation message that he had been proclaiming, centering in on Yeshua being the resurrected Messiah. Peter does add one Old Testament passage that he had not yet mentioned, or at least had not been recorded up to this point. The passage he alluded to was Psalm 118:22-26. It talks about a stone that was rejected by builders. This rejected stone came from Yahweh and had become the cornerstone, which was the chief stone in any edifice. Peter says that Yeshua is this stone. This makes perfect sense! The stone came from Yahweh; Yeshua came from Yahweh. You can read all about this in Acts 4:1-22.

After being questioned and then released by the Sanhedrin, Peter and John went to tell their own company/fellowship about all that had happened to them while in front of the leaders of Israel. Once the fellowship heard the news, they lifted up their voices in prayer, and the prayer is recorded for us in Acts 4:24-30. It is this prayer that I keep coming back to, so I'd like to dissect it in this study.

Acts 4:24 And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou *art* God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is:

The first thing I want to point out is who the people are praying to. They lift up their voice to God and say "Lord, thou art God." They add "who made heaven, earth, sea, and everything in them." Who is this? There can be no doubt that this is Almighty Yahweh. The phrase "Lord God" (or more correctly Yahweh the Mighty One) is used so many times in the Old Testament in reference to God. Just get out a concordance or do a word search on your computer or phone app to see this.

The reference to the Lord God making all things takes us back to the 10 commandments. Every time I read Acts 4:24 I think about the 4th commandment, the one about the Sabbath day, because in Exodus 20:11 we read about Yahweh making the heavens, earth, sea, and everything in them. Psalm 146:5-6 is another reference to this, although less known. The Psalmist speaks of the God of Jacob and calls Him the Lord God or Yahweh the Mighty One. Then he says that this God made heaven, earth, sea, and all that therein is.

What we are seeing then, right here in the book of Acts, is a first century example of the believers in Yeshua the Messiah, praying to Yahweh God. That's who they are directing their prayer to.

Acts 4:25-26 Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against Yahweh, and against his Christ.

The prayer now speaks of Yahweh speaking by the mouth of His servant David. An interesting point to notice is that Yahweh is doing the speaking here, but He speaks by or through someone else's mouth. In this case David's mouth. This is such an important concept seen over and over in the Bible. We saw one early on in this study where Yahweh did miracles through Yeshua (Acts 2:22). Who did the miracles? Yahweh; but the miracles were done through an agent. Agency is going on here as well. The believers pray and say that Yahweh spoke *by the mouth of David*.

They then quote a passage from David's second Psalm, Psalm 2:1-2. This Psalm speaks of heathens and other people (kings, rulers) assembling against the Lord, and against His Anointed One. This is speaking of people assembling against Yahweh and Yeshua. Notice that there's (1) Yahweh, and then there's (2) His Christ or Messiah. That's again 2 persons, with the first person superior to the second person.

Why was this early fellowship mentioning Psalm 2 in their prayer? They understood that what had happened to Yeshua was a fulfillment of *that* Psalm.

Acts 4:27-28 For of a truth against thy holy child Yeshua, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

Here's where we get to further understand some things. First of all, notice that the One they have been praying to has a holy child named Yeshua. "For of a truth against **THY** holy child Yeshua," they pray. This shows that the fellowship isn't praying to Yeshua. They are praying to Yahweh and they mention *His* holy child Yeshua. Again, Yeshua is Yahweh's holy child, and as we've seen through Acts 2 and 3, a person cannot be saved without believing upon Yeshua because he is the one Yahweh sent for our salvation! Nevertheless Yeshua is not the Lord God who made the heavens, earth, sea, and all that is therein. He's rather the Son of the One who made all those things.

Next, notice what the early church saw as the fulfillment of Psalm 2:1-2. They mention that Herod, Pontius Pilate, the nations (or heathen), and the people of Israel had all gathered together *against* Yahweh's holy child Yeshua. What did David prophesy in Psalm 2? That the heathens, people, and also kings/rulers would take their stand *against* Yahweh and *against* His Messiah. This was fulfilled when the crucifixion took place. We know Herod didn't like Yeshua, and even though Pontius Pilate "washed his hands" from the occurrence, he still allowed the crucifixion to be carried out. The gentiles or *heathen* (as it should be correctly translated in context) mentioned here is probably the Roman soldiers who carried out the flogging and actual crucifixion. The people of Israel are the ones who cried out "Crucify him! Crucify him!" They all came against the holy child

Yeshua, and thus came against Yahweh who sent His holy child. The account can be read at the end of each of the four gospels.

Thirdly, notice that the early church recognized that Yahweh was sovereign in what was happening. Everyone of these parties assembled against the holy child Yeshua to do *whatever Yahweh's hand and counsel determined beforehand to be done*. Yahweh can pre-ordain something to take place, and get glory out of whatever He ordains, even if it involves the taking place of something wicked. Nothing happens without purpose. Yahweh allows everything to happen, often-times for purposes that are far beyond our understanding. The cross is the biggest example of this. The murder of Yeshua is the greatest sin to ever be committed. Just think about murdering the holy, sinless Son that Yahweh sent to save you. Yet at the same time, Yahweh had already determined it to happen, and spoke about it, through the mouth of His prophets in the Old Testament, and the early church believed this, thus they prayed what they prayed in Acts 4:28.

Acts 4:29-30 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Yeshua.

When they pray, "And now Lord," it is still the same Lord they began praying to back in verse 24. We can know this because they ask that the Lord will perform signs and wonders through them in the name of *His* holy child Yeshua. This proves that the Lord they are praying to is Yahweh the Lord.

They are asking the Lord to look at how Peter and John were threatened by the Sanhedrin, and to give them boldness to speak His word, and that's a reference to the word or message about Yeshua. They pray that the Lord would perform healings, signs, and wonders through them, in the name of Yeshua, the holy child of the Lord.

This prayer by the unanimous voice of the early church is just a continuing witness to Peter's salvation messages in Acts 2 and 3. Yahweh answered this prayer. The early church received boldness to preach the word even in spite of severe persecution (Acts 5:17-18; 40-42). Many healings, signs, and wonders were performed through the hands of the apostles (Acts 4:33; 5:12-16). Yahweh was using those who received His Son Yeshua mightily.

This prayer is a model for us today. When we pray we should lift up our voice to the Lord God, Yahweh the Mighty One; the Mighty One who made the heavens, earth, sea, and everything in them. We should pray that He use us to speak the message about His holy child Yeshua, no matter what we may encounter.