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Sundays

9:30am - Bible Study

10:20am & 5pm - Worship

Wednesdays

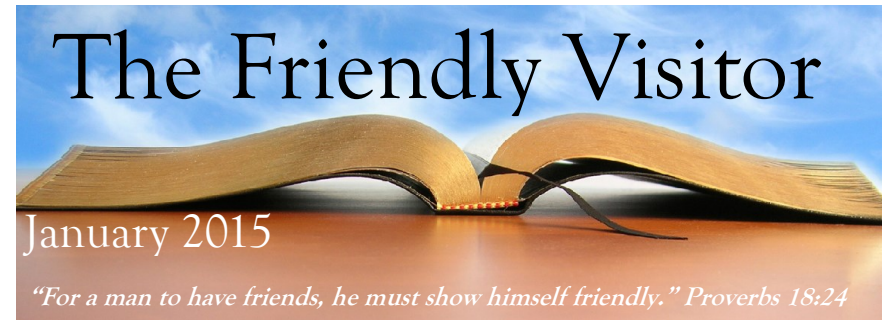
7pm - Bible Study

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If You Had Been There

by John R. Gibson

(Note: Please read Acts 2 and keep your Bible open to it as you read this article.)

Try to imagine what it would have been like to have been in Jerusalem on that first Pentecost after the crucifixion of Jesus. That morning a sound like that of a strong wind would have gotten your attention and drawn you toward a multitude gathering around twelve men. As you drew closer to investigate you would have seen something really strange as these men appeared to have fire sitting on them and were speaking a lot of different languages.

You would have been both amazed and perplexed and known you were seeing something significant, even though you couldn't figure out what it meant. As you were thinking about it what it could possibly mean, you would have heard one of the twelve respond to the accusation from some that he and his companions were drunk. Maybe you would have thought the alcohol explanation was a possibility or maybe you wouldn't have, but the speaker, a man called Simon Peter, would have quickly dismissed that and turned your attention to a passage from the prophet Joel. As a regular at the synagogue you would have been somewhat familiar with this passage about God's Spirit being poured out, even though you had never really understood all that

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it was saying. So, with the fire-like tongues on these men and their speaking different languages, you might have been eager to hear his explanation of all that the prophet had spoken of, but to your surprise he didn't spend much time on the prophecy of Joel; instead, he began to talk about a man who had been killed about fifty days earlier.

You might have previously heard about some of the man's miracles, but imagine the surprise you would have felt when this Peter claimed the man's crucifixion was part of God's predetermined plan. And not only did he make that claim, he made an even more astounding claim when he said that God raised this man from the dead. Perhaps you would have wanted to turn and walk away in disbelief of such strange claims, but the great sound you had heard, the fire-like tongues sitting on these men, their use of many languages, along with the matter of fact proclamation caused you to stay so that you might hear more.

If you had stayed, you would have heard him use David's prophecies in Psalm 16 and

Psalm 110 to establish that the Messiah (or Christ) you had been looking for had to die and be raised from the dead. You would have then heard him assert that he and these other eleven men could give eyewitness testimony that one had indeed been raised from the dead—the Jesus you and others had wanted crucified about fifty days previously.

Yes, if you had been there that day you would have heard a sermon that cut people to the heart as it caused them to realize they had killed the one whom God had made Lord and Christ. Perhaps you would have been among those whose conscience moved them to interrupt and ask, "What shall we do?"

If you had been there and cut to the heart, you would not have been told that there was nothing you could do to right the great wrong done at Passover, but would have heard, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is

Perhaps you would have been among those whose conscience moved them to interrupt and ask, "What shall we do?"

to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call." Now, what you would have done if you had been there that day? Would you have been one of the three thousand who, after some more words of exhortation, was baptized that day, or would you have walked away still feeling guilty?

Obviously, no one reading this today was there, but if we carefully consider Acts 2, we should see that "those who gladly received his word"

because of the sound like a wind, the tongues like fire, the foreign languages, fulfilled Scripture, and the testimony of eyewitnesses didn't raise any objections to

the command to be baptized. Those who were cut to the heart and convinced that Jesus was indeed the Christ did just as they were instructed without any argument.

Again, we weren't there that day, but why should our response be any different? If we understand that we have sinned and are cut to the heart with guilt, why don't we simply do the same thing they did? Why argue with the gracious offer of salvation? The same question could be asked of us that was asked of Saul (later known as the apostle Paul) a few years after Pentecost, "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).

All Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Version, copyright 1994, Thomas Nelson, Inc.

"For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

1 Peter 2:1-3