

“Save Yourselves”

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.”

Acts 2:40

Every so often, it is beneficial for us to look deeper into the text of the Bible. Although it is not necessary for one to be a student of the languages of the Bible in order to understand it, a cursory examination can instill within us a vividness and appreciation for the Holy Spirit-inspired words. For this reason, this article will examine an important phrase found in Acts 2:40.

The verb “witnessed” or *diemarturato* as an aorist-middle-indicative. The aorist tense in this word indicates a completed action and the middle voice indicates that Peter had participated in the results of the witnessing. Peter had testified and witnessed to those on Pentecost and that action was treated as a completed action.

The word for “exhorted” is *parekalei* and is an imperfect-active-indicative. The imperfect tense in this word indicates a continuous action in the past and the active voice indicates that Peter had produced the action or exhortation. Rienecker also adds that the “imperfect pictures the repeated action.” It is not enough to encourage someone once, but it must be continued. If someone were in a life-threatening situation, it would not be appropriate to warn once, but concern would compel one to warn over and over again. The imperfect tense demonstrates the necessity of constant warning.

Perhaps the most significant term in this verse is “saved” or *sothete* which is an aorist-passive-imperative. The passive voice in this word indicates that the subject receives the action. We must “be saved” by God, not earn our salvation through our own goodness.

Vine’s states that *diemarturomai* means to “testify or protest solemnly” (p. 1143). It is from the word family which includes *martureo*, the common word for witness, but this word is a more intensive form. A. T. Robertson says that *diemarturomai* means to make a “solemn attestation or call to witness” (p. 36). Thayer adds that *diemarturomai* means to “earnestly and religiously charge” (p. 139). The strength of the word can be seen in Luke 16:28 where the rich man wanted to go and make a solemn protest to the members of his family. Also, in 2 Timothy 2:14, Paul reminded Timothy to “solemnly charge” those who would wrangle about words.

Thayer states that *parekalei* is derived from the word *parecheo* which means to "reach forth or show" (p. 488). Vine's defines the word to mean, "to admonish, exhort, to urge one to pursue some course of conduct (always prospective, looking to the future, in contrast to the meaning to comfort, which is retrospective, having to do with trial experienced)" (p. 400). Young's Concordance indicates that the word occurs 21 times in the New Testament and most of the time is used to exhort brethren rather than exhorting those outside the body of Christ. Paul is fond of this word and he uses it in over half of the 21 occurrences to exhort brethren to get their lives right with God.

Sothete is from the root word *sozo* which Thayer defines, "to save from the punitive wrath of God at the judgment of the last day" (p. 610). *Sozo* is the verb form which is linked to the noun *soteria* which means salvation. Thayer also points out that in the scriptures the idea of being saved is used in two senses. In a negative sense, *sozo* is used as a "deliverance from the penalties of the Messianic judgment" (p. 610). This is the sense used in Acts 2:40. However, *sozo* is also used in a positive sense so as to "make one a partaker of the salvation by Christ."

Young's Concordance indicates that *sozo* occurs 90 times in the New Testament and has a variety of meanings including the deliverance of believers in the day of judgment (Romans 5:9), the salvation granted by believing on Jesus Christ (Acts 2:47), those who endure to the end of time (Matthew 10:22), and a deliverance from danger (Matthew 8:25).

The great implication for our act of being saved, as indicated by the passive voice for "saved," is that salvation needs to be applied to us. Contrary to several belief systems, we cannot earn salvation by our own merits. God must give us salvation as a free gift (Romans 5:15-16, 18). By responding to the call of the gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:14), we can be saved through God's gracious plan of belief (John 6:29), repentance (Acts 17:30), confession (Romans 10:9-10), and baptism (1 Peter 3:21).

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