

Acts 2:40

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. This verse concludes Peter's Pentecost sermon with an urgent call to decision. The Greek word *diamartyromai* (διαμαρτύρομαι, "testify") carries the sense of solemn, earnest witness—Peter was not merely sharing information but calling people to life-transforming faith. The verb *parakaleō* (παρακαλέω, "exhort") means to beseech, encourage, or plead with urgency and compassion.

The phrase "many other words" indicates that Luke provides only a summary of Peter's extensive preaching. The command "Save yourselves" (*sōthēte*, σώθητε) is an aorist passive imperative, literally "be saved"—emphasizing both human response and divine action. The word "untoward" (*skolias*, σκολιάς) means crooked, perverse, or corrupt, echoing Deuteronomy 32:5's description of Israel's rebellion. Peter calls believers to separate from the spiritually twisted generation that rejected Christ.

This verse bridges the proclamation of the gospel (Acts 2:14-39) and the response (Acts 2:41). It emphasizes that salvation requires personal decision and separation from worldly systems opposed to God. The urgency reflects the reality that every generation faces the choice to embrace or reject Christ, with eternal consequences.

Historical Context

This sermon occurred on the day of Pentecost, 50 days after Passover, when Jerusalem was filled with Jewish pilgrims from throughout the Roman world. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit and Peter's bold proclamation happened in the context of recent political tension—Jesus had been crucified just seven weeks earlier by Roman and Jewish authorities.

Peter addressed a "crooked generation" steeped in first-century Jewish religious culture that had largely rejected Jesus as Messiah. The temple establishment, Pharisees, and Sadducees maintained significant power, and allegiance to Christ meant potential excommunication from synagogues and social ostracism (John 9:22, 12:42). Peter's call to "save yourselves" meant repenting from complicity with the religious leaders who condemned Jesus.

The response was remarkable—3,000 people believed and were baptized (Acts 2:41), forming the nucleus of the Jerusalem church. This occurred despite the risks: believers faced persecution from Jewish authorities (Acts 4-8) and eventually the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. The early church's willingness to separate from the corrupt generation demonstrated the transformative power of the gospel.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does Peter's urgent call to "save yourselves" challenge passive or cultural Christianity today?
2. What does it mean practically to separate from a "crooked generation" while still engaging the world with the gospel?
3. How does the emphasis on both divine action ("be saved") and human response shape our understanding of conversion?

4. What parallels exist between the first-century rejection of Christ and contemporary cultural opposition to biblical truth?
5. How should the reality of 3,000 conversions in one day inform our expectations for evangelism and church growth?

Interlinear Text

ἑτέροις	τε	λόγοις	πλείοσιν	διεμαρτύρετο	καὶ	παρεκάλει
other	And	words	with many	did he testify	and	exhort
G2087	G5037	G3056	G4119	G1263	G2532	G3870
λέγων,	Σώθητε	ἀπὸ	τῆς	γενεᾶς	τῆς	σκολιᾶς
saying	Save yourselves	from	generation	generation	untoward	
G3004	G4982	G575	G3588	G1074	G3588	G3778
					G4646	

Additional Cross-References

Philippians 2:15 (Parallel theme): That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;

Deuteronomy 32:5 (Parallel theme): They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of his children: they are a perverse and crooked generation.

Matthew 17:17 (Parallel theme): Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me.

1 Timothy 4:16 (Salvation): Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

Ephesians 4:17 (Witness): This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,

2 Corinthians 6:17 (Parallel theme): Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

Matthew 16:4 (Parallel theme): A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed.

2 Corinthians 5:20 (Parallel theme): Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

Galatians 5:3 (Word): For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.

Acts 28:23 (Word): And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org