

# “THROUGH THE BIBLE”

PASTOR SANDY ADAMS

## ACTS 1:1-2:39

What if the book of Acts didn't exist? When we finished the Gospels the next book in the Bible was "[Paul's letter to the Church at Rome.](#)" All kinds of questions would swirl through our heads... *How did news of events on the outskirts of the empire get all the way back to the capitol city of Rome? What caused the Church to grow, in just a few short years, from a smattering of timid, fearful Jewish disciples huddled away in Jerusalem to a full-fledged, Gentile Church living openly in the heart of the empire? Even more basic, "what's a church?" - "who is Paul?" - "why a letter?"* The book of Acts answers those questions, plus much, much more.

Acts traces the expansion of Christianity around the Mediterranean world. It begins in the *Jewish capitol of Jerusalem* and ends in the *Gentile capitol of Rome*. It explains how the *Jewish Messiah* became *Lord of the Gentiles*. Before He ascended into heaven Jesus gathered His disciples, and told them to go and make disciples of all nations. Acts tells us how they did it!

It's absolutely crucial we study the book of Acts, for there has never been a more successful period of church history than that of the first church. In a single generation the disciples took the Gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth. Just 30 years after the resurrection of Jesus, Paul told the Colossians that the Gospel had gone out into "[all the world.](#)" In Thessalonica the Christian missionaries were accused of having "[turned the world upside down.](#)" And their success was without the 21<sup>st</sup> Century help of *technology* and *modern transportation*. The only *media* was pen and parchment. The Church had little *money* and no *marketing*. There was no such thing as church *buildings*. The *modern church* desperately needs to recapture the power of the *early church*.

The 1996 blockbuster movie titled "*Twister*," was about a group of tornado chasers. One reason for the film's success was its vivid special effects. Shortly after its release, the movie was shown at a drive-in theater near Kansas City. One night during the movie, a real-life twister swept through the theater ripping apart the screen and destroying the concession area. Talk about realistic special effects! That might've been too vivid for my tastes.

I bring this up though to direct our prayers. Over the next few months, as we study the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the radical growth of the early church, why don't we pray that God will bring to life what's on the screen? *We have the same God...the same Spirit...[let's ask for an Acts repeat!](#)*

Verse 1, "[The former account I made, O Theophilus...](#)" Luke writes both his Gospel and Acts

to a friend named *"Theophilus."* When he was born the doctor said, *"That's the-awfulist looking baby I've ever seen."* The name stuck. The word *"Theophilus"* means *"friend of God."* He was possibly a Roman Official won to Christ by the Apostle Paul.

*Luke was a doctor* who traveled with Paul as a personal physician. Later in the book he writes of Paul's journeys in the first person. He was with Paul. *Luke was also a historian.* He used the two years Paul was in prison in Caesarea to canvass the region. He could've visited the Mediterranean Coast and Antioch, Galilee, Samaria, Jerusalem researching his Gospel and Acts. Often in Roman times a rich benefactor would bankroll a work of art or history. Theophilus may've sponsored Luke's work. If so, what a contribution! In heaven, he gets introduced as the guy who gave us a quarter of the NT.

Luke speaks of his Gospel. It was the former account *"of all that Jesus began both to do and teach..."* And it would've ended with the crucifixion, but three days later Jesus rose from the dead! He wasn't done *"doing and teaching..."* Jesus had only just begun... There was much more to come... Some stories deserve a sequel!... and Luke's trusty pen was ready. It reminds me of the guy who went to see the movie, *"Malcolm X."* He said the movie was so good he wished he'd seen one through nine.

In John 14:12 Jesus promised His disciples *"The works that I do (you) will do also: and greater works than these (you) will do."* This is the book of Acts. Through the power of the Holy Spirit the disciples continued the works and teachings of Jesus. Luke's sequel is called *"The Acts of the Apostles,"* but it should be *"The Acts of the Holy Spirit."* Jesus continued to do and teach. And He's still at it... In a sense the book doesn't stop with Acts 28, it's still being written. With each generation of Christians Jesus writes a new chapter.

Again the book of Acts begins, *"The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God."* The Gospels record only a few of the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus. But Luke assures us Jesus provided, *"many infallible proofs."* He knew the faith of future generations of Christians would hinge on the testimony of the first eyewitnesses. Thus, He made certain the evidence of His resurrection was so *undeniable and irrefutable – so clear and conclusive* - that none of the disciples would ever doubt its reality. *And none of them did...*

Verse 4, *"And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."* Moses was given the most mammoth baby-sitting job in history. For 40 years he cared for 2 million Jew-venile delinquents. And he needed help... Rather than deposit the Holy Spirit solely on Moses, God poured out His Spirit on 70 elders. But this decentralization of spiritual power concerned Moses' apprentice, Joshua. He thought, *"what if common folk start to think they too can have God's power?"* And I love Moses' reply in Numbers 11... *"Oh, that all the LORD's people were prophets and that the LORD would put his Spirit upon them!"* *Moses' wish* became *the Father's promise.* Throughout the OT - from Isaiah, to Jeremiah, to Ezekiel, to Joel - God predicted the day when He would pour out His Spirit on all His people. Now the

time is near. The disciples return to Jerusalem and wait. They're about to be *"baptized with the Holy Spirit."*

And here's where terminology can trip us up... On this subject some of our Baptist brothers are quick to point out 1Corinthians 12:13, *"For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body."* In other words, when a person becomes a Christian they are initiated by the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ. Thus, they claim that the *"baptism of the Holy Spirit"* is synonymous with conversion - *but its not that simple...*

Some words have multiple meanings. Like our English word *"bear."* It's a grizzly animal. It's carrying a load. It's birthing a child. It's an act of endurance. Likewise, the Greek word *"baptizo"* has multiple meanings. On the one hand, it means *"to initiate."* When a rookie quarterback enters his first game and gets sacked we say he had *"his baptism into the NFL."* But the word can also mean *"to dip", "to engulf, "to immerse."* When a person is baptized with water they're submerged or dipped into the water. So when *Paul* in his letters uses the word *"baptism"* he's referring to *initiation*. According to Paul to be baptized by the Spirit is to be made a part of the Body of Christ. But when *Luke*, or *Jesus*, or *Peter* use the term they're speaking of the *engulfing or immersing* into the power of the Holy Spirit. In Acts 1, Luke will refer to this experience with the Spirit in 5 ways. As *"baptism"* – as *"reception"* – He *"comes upon"* – He *"fills"* – He's *"poured out."* My point is don't get caught up in *semantics* and miss the *dynamic*. Call it what you want, but we all need to be drenched in Holy Spirit power.

Verse 6, *"Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"* The disciples were still focused on Israeli politics. Not until the Spirit is unleashed do they understand that before Jesus establishes a earthly kingdom, He builds a spiritual one. The Spirit will invade human hearts. *"And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority."* They were preoccupied with the future, because they lacked His power for the present... *That's about to change...*

Verse 8, *"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."* Notice verse 8 provides us a *power*, a *purpose*, and a *plan*. The *power* is the Holy Spirit. Our *purpose* is to be witnesses. And the *plan* is to spread out from Jerusalem into all the earth. Verse 8 becomes an outline for the book of Acts... *Chapters 1-7* describe the Church's outreach to *Jerusalem*... In *chapters 8-9* the Gospel goes to *Judea and Samaria*. *Chapters 10-28* takes it to *the ends of the earth*. And to fulfill such a grand commission the disciples will need supernatural help...

Notice in verse 8 Jesus says the Spirit will come *"upon"* you. This is the third of three experiences the NT describes between the believer and the Holy Spirit. In John 14 Jesus said the Spirit was *"with"* them, and will be *"in"* them. Before we're saved the Spirit is *with* us – convicting us of sin, and drawing us to the Savior. When we believe in Jesus the Spirit comes to dwell *in* us. But there's a third experience we can have where the Spirit comes *upon* us. He engulfs us with love and power. This is what Jesus promises us here.

While the Spirit is *with us* we can *blaspheme* Him and reject Jesus. Once the Spirit is *in us* we can *grieve* Him by failing to cooperate. And since the Holy Spirit desires to come *upon us*

and empower us we can **quench** the Spirit by failing to open up, and blocking what He wants to do.

One year the Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena, California was delayed when a beautifully decorated float sputtered and stopped in the middle of the parade route. *The float had run out of gas.* The whole extravaganza was put on hold while someone ran to fetch a can of gasoline. But what's hilarious is that the out-of-gas float was sponsored by the **Standard Oil Company**. Here's a company with vast petroleum reserves, but their float ran out of gas. *And this is often the situation with many Christians.* God's power is at our fingertips – *just a prayer away* - but we run out of spiritual gas. Let's not quench... but seek the power of the Holy Spirit.

“Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? For Jesus His ascension was a reunion. He was headed home. But for the disciples it was a bewildering moment. They stood with dropped jaw – amazed at the sight - but with all sorts of uncertainties in their head... The angels answer one unspoken question... “*This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.*” You'll see Him again. Jesus will return a second time. Which implied there was work to do! The job of spreading the Gospel to the ends of earth has a time constraint. It needs to be done before Jesus comes back, and there's no time to waste. The disciples need spiritual power.

John Stott once said, “**Before Christ sent the church into the world, He sent the Spirit into the Church. The same must be observed today.**” I agree. Let's never be guilty of doing the *work of God* without the *Spirit of God*. There is no substitute for spiritual power... *not leadership intuition, or well-oiled organization, or professional know-how, or bankrolled initiatives, or slick presentations.* As one author said, “**When we rely on organization, we get what organization can do. When we rely upon education, we get what education can do. When we rely on eloquence, we get what eloquence can do. But when we rely on the Holy Spirit, we get what God can do!**”

Verse 12, “*Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey.*” Or about a half mile. “*And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were staying...*” This was probably the upper room where Jesus and His men shared the Last Passover. Tradition says it was the house of John Mark.

“Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James *the son* of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot; and Judas *the son* of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.” Note how “*Mary the mother of Jesus*” gets listed. She's not the object of prayer. She is a participant. Mary is *among the disciples*, not over them. Notice too, Jesus' brothers are among the believers. The last time we saw them, in John 7 where we're told, “*even his brothers did not believe in Him.*” Apparently, the resurrection opened their minds and changed their hearts.

“And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples (altogether the number of

names was about a 120)...” Peter was the definite leader... “And (Peter) said, “Men *and* brethren, this Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus; for he was numbered with us and obtained a part in this ministry.” (Now this man purchased a field with the wages of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out. And it became known to all those dwelling in Jerusalem; so that field is called in their own language, Akel Dama, that is, Field of Blood.) “For it is written in the Book of Psalms: ‘*Let his dwelling place be desolate, and let no one live in it*’; and, ‘*Let another take his office*.’” Peter quotes two Davidic psalms – 69:25 and 109:8.

A couple of points... Matthew 27:7 says *the chief priests* paid for the potter's field, but since it was Judas' money, here Luke says Judas bought the field. Also, Matthew 27:5 tells us Judas hanged himself, yet here Luke tells us Judas fell and perforated his abdomen so that his guts poured out. Put the two accounts together and here's what may've happened - Judas hung himself, the tree limb snapped, and he fell on the rocks below and died. Now Peter sees in Psalm 109:8 that Judas needs to be replaced.

Verse 21 “Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.” Here were Peter's qualifications for a replacement disciple... First, [longevity](#). He needed to have followed Jesus from the start. Second, he needed to be [an eyewitness of the risen Christ](#).

“And they proposed two: Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed and said, “You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.” And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles.” There's no doubt Peter was correct in his understanding that a replacement for Judas was mandated by Scripture, but I believe that his impulsive nature caused him to jump the gun and select the wrong person.

DL Moody once said, ["Trying to understand the Bible without the Holy Spirit is like trying to read a sundial by moonlight."](#) Peter's interpretation was right, but his application was wrong. He wasn't Spirit-led in His application. [Casting lots](#) was the equivalent of *rolling dice* or *drawing straws*. It was reliance on chance. And after Pentecost it's never seen again in the NT. From now on we'll find believers leaning totally on the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

It's my opinion that Matthias was not God's choice for the 12<sup>th</sup> apostle. On the Road to Damascus Jesus will choose [Paul](#) as an ["apostle to the Gentiles."](#)

Chapter 2 begins, “[When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.](#)” “*Pentecost*” is a Greek word which means, “50<sup>th</sup>”. It was the 50<sup>th</sup> day - or seventh Sunday - after Easter. Pentecost was originally the Jewish Feast of Weeks or Harvest. It's toward the end of May. At the conclusion of the spring growing season two of the first sheaves of wheat harvested were offered to the Lord. *And this was fitting symbolism...* On this Pentecost God is about to begin a harvest of souls – the Church Age – and He'll do so by dedicating two bunches – Jews and Gentiles.

The Jews also observed Pentecost as the anniversary of the giving of the Law. The two

sheaves also stood for the two tablets. Again, its fitting that on the day the Law was given to Israel, God poured out His grace on the Church. Here's more symbolism... Exodus 32:28 tells us that on the day Moses received the Law 3000 of the sons of Levi fell in judgment. In contrast, before this day is through - the day He pours out His Spirit – 3000 souls get saved.

Verse 2, “**And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.**” In the Bible the Spirit is often depicted as the wind... You can't predict or chart His movements. All you can do is lift your sails and go where He takes you.

An albatross is a strange bird. It has a wing span of 12 feet, but its body weight makes it too heavy to take off on its own. When the wind stops blowing its grounded. It stays airborne by gliding - *but wow, can an albatross glide.* I read where scientists strapped a radio transmitter to one albatross. After 30 days and 9000 miles the battery gave out, but the bird was still over the ocean. It's been estimated the albatross can stay at sea for years at a time. *But its secret is its ability to ride the wind....* When will we learn that we're like an albatross? We're grounded without the wind. Our only wings are faith. The only way for us to soar is stretch out and catch a gust of the Holy Spirit.

But along with the wind, came fire! “**Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire** (bright flickers of fire), **and one sat upon each of them.**” When Moses dedicated the OT Tabernacle, God sent fire from heaven to consume the sacrifice. It happened again when Solomon dedicated the Temple. Now a new, spiritual Temple is being dedicated – in which we are its living sacrifices – and again fire from heaven falls at the opening ceremonies. In the Tabernacle and Temple the fire was never repeated. Likewise, in Acts, the flickers appeared just once – the day the Church opened its doors.

Verse 4, “**And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit...**” With the wind and fire came a filling. God's Spirit filled those who were waiting on divine energy.

“**And (they) began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.**” This was not a “*learn a language in 30 seconds*” program. *The gift of tongues* is not a native or learned language. It may not even be a known or earthly language. In 1 Corinthians 13 Paul mentions, “**the tongues of men and angels.**” The gift of tongues can also be an angelic language.

*What is the gift of tongues?* When my heart is so full of praise to God that I can't find the right words to express my love, God's Spirit will come to my rescue. He'll place words in my mind I don't understand, but I utter them by faith, trusting the Spirit that they're the exact representation of my feelings. God knows all languages, and He refuses to leave anyone who wants to praise Him tongue-tied. The gift of tongues is still available to those who ask.

Verse 5, “**And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven.**” Jews from all over the world were in town for the feast. “**And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language.**” On Pentecost the Spirit-inspired tongues were a variety of Mediterranean languages. The visitors recognized the church's praise in their local language. Notice the reversal here. In Genesis 11 at the Tower of Babel, God confused the languages and scattered the people. Here He reunites people by blessing them with the supernatural

ability to understand each other.

“Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, “Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how *is it that* we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? In the first century most people were bi-lingual. They spoke the global Greek, *and* they spoke a local language. Now in the streets of Jerusalem visitors from all over the world heard Galilean Jews speaking in languages they had probably never heard before.

“Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs - we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.” And notice the content of what was spoken... “*The wonderful works of God*” – tongues is always speaking praise to God. If you travel in Charismatic circles you've heard the terminology, “*a message in tongues.*” Understand this is not a biblical phrase. The gift of tongues is not a *proclamation from God*, but a *praise or prayer to God*. Paul states this clearly in 1Corinthians 14:2, “*For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God...*” Prophecy is God speaking to man. Tongues is man speaking to God. Don't get the two confused.

“So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “*Whatever could this mean?*” Others mocking said, “*They are full of new wine.*” They wrote the disciples off as drunk. They had too many wine coolers. They thought the church had taken a *nip* – rather than a *dip* in the Holy Spirit. Yet apparently there're some similarities... *unbridled joy, uninhibited expression, unreserved boldness...*

Tozer put it this way, “*The Spirit... has an exhilarating effect on the soul much as wine has on the body. The Spirit-filled man may literally dwell in a state of spiritual fervor amounting to a mild and pure inebriation.*” When we're filled with the Spirit we're filled with enthusiasm. Years later, in 1Peter 1:8, ole Pentecost Pete, still spoke of “*rejoicing with joy inexpressible and full of glory.*” The Spirit provides a supernatural buzz!

“But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them...” He's providing an explanation! “*Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day.*” Or 9 AM. Peter's comment implies that if it had been 9 PM you might need to worry about this crowd – they could well be tipsy - but not before breakfast. I've heard that Orthodox Jews don't eat or drink anything before 9 am. Here's Peter's point, we're not drunk! “*This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel...*” Peter quotes Joel 2:28-32... and this is very important... The crowd just witnessed a spiritual phenomena – now Peter points to chapter and verse to explain the experience. He says, “*this is what was spoken...*” In other words, *we're by the book*. It was Scriptural. It's biblical.

Some Charismatics excuse emotionalism and sensationalism by saying, “*More can be cooked up in the kitchen than what appears on the menu.*” This is lethal thinking. Once you allow *experience* rather than *Scripture* to be the norm for the Church, you open yourself up to all kinds of deceptive and dangerous practices. It's safe to be able to point to chapter and verse. Extra-biblical experiences can steer you off track. Stick with the script!

In verse 17 Peter quotes Joel 2, *'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God...'* Joel predicted the Spirit would be poured out in the last days. And if Peter considered *his day "the last days,"* how much more applicable is this blessing to us... Never let anyone tell you that the power and gifts of the Spirit are not for today. The Spirit is to be unleashed in the *"the last days."*

In the last days, God says, *"I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy."* As Moses wished... the day has come when the Holy Spirit and His power is no longer the exclusive privilege of a chosen few. Today, everyone – young and old, male and female, Bulldog and Techie – can be filled with the Spirit. Verse 19, and, *"I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: blood and fire and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD."* These are Joel's images of God's final judgment.

Remember Peter was addressing a Jewish audience. And this is what it'll take to wake up the Jews. The global cataclysms of the Great Tribulation and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Israel will one day go hand in hand. *"And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."* In Romans 10:13, Paul quotes this verse to the Gentiles.

Peter begins his challenge in verse 22, *"Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know - Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death..."* Notice how Peter believed and now blends both divine sovereignty and human responsibility. In one verse he teaches predestination *and* free will. The cause of the crucifixion was both the will of God *and* the evil of man.

In verse 24, he continues to speak of Jesus, *"whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it. For David says concerning Him (Peter quotes Psalm 16:8-11): 'I foresaw the LORD always before my face, for He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; moreover my flesh also will rest in hope. For You will not leave my soul in Hades, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.'* Jesus' body would never deteriorate. Here's a biblical prediction of His resurrection. Peter wraps up the psalm. *"You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence."* Jesus would return to God.

*"Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses."* King David, the ancestor of the Messianic line, predicted a risen Messiah. Peter argues that all that happened in Jesus' life fulfilled the Scripture.

*"Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear."* Peter is saying the



Jesus that was crucified, is now sitting on the throne in heaven. He's now pouring out the power of the Holy Spirit. "For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: 'The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'" Peter quotes Psalm 110:1. Notice too, "David did not ascend..." No one in the OT ascended to heaven until Jesus paid the pardon for sin. Their soul went to Hades to wait for Jesus to lead them into God's presence.

And the coming of the Holy Spirit was proof of Jesus' heavenly arrival. Jesus promised His disciples that when He departed, He would send another Comforter. Pentecost was proof that His word was good. It was evidence His sacrifice was accepted and He'd taken His seat as Lord of all.

Roald Amundsen was a Norwegian explorer - the first man to discover the South Pole. On one of his expeditions he took a homing pigeon and set it loose when he reached his destination. Imagine the joy when that bird arrived on his wife's windowsill back in Norway. She knew her husband was alive. His mission was accomplished. This is the message Jesus sent us at Pentecost.

Verse 36, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." Wow! Peter is bold. Just a few days earlier he and his cohorts were barricaded behind closed doors, unwilling to step outside for fear of the Jewish authorities. Now, he's toe to toe with the same Jews who engineered Jesus' execution – and he takes a jab - "*this Jesus, whom you crucified*". Where's the timidity now? Is this the same Peter we knew in the Gospels? The answer is "No!" What a difference it makes to be filled with the Holy Spirit!

"Now when they heard *this*, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" The Holy Spirit brought a deep conviction of sin. These Jews were gripped with guilt. Verse 38, "Then Peter said to them, "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 to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call." Notice the sequence. You repent... then you're baptized. This is why we reject infant baptism as unbiblical. A baby isn't old enough to repent.

There are some denominations that use verse 38 as a proof text for [baptismal regeneration](#) - that you're not truly saved until your baptized. Yet examine the whole of Scripture and you realize this can't be true. The thief on the cross wasn't baptized, yet Jesus told him, "[Today you will be with me in Paradise](#)." Paul told the Corinthians he didn't come to baptize, but preach the Gospel. Obviously, the two are not the same. [The NT is clear, salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.](#)

Warren Wiersbe blames the King James for confusing the translation of verse 38. He suggests it should actually read, "[Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus on account of the remission of sins.](#)"

I personally have no problem with verse 38 "[as is](#)." The NT never portrays baptism as essential for salvation, *but if you're saved why not? Why wouldn't you want to be baptized?*

This verse shows the priority placed on baptism. In the early church it was a natural progression – *you repented, believed, were baptized, and were filled with the Holy Spirit*. It was a packaged deal. Peter’s phrasing reflects the fact that he sees repentance and baptism as a unit. One naturally followed the other, so *why bother to separate them?* In the early church when you came to Jesus you went home wet. None of this making a commitment, then waiting 20 years to follow it up with baptism. It’s been said, “An unbaptized believer is foreign to the book of Acts.”