

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

ACTS 1:1-2:39

What if the book of Acts didn't exist? When we finished up the Gospel of John 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 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?

And even more basic we'd ask, "what's a church?" - "who is Paul?" - "why a letter?" The book of Acts answers these questions, plus much, much more.

Acts traces the expansion of Christianity across the Mediterranean rim - from *the Jewish capitol of Jerusalem* to *the Gentile capitol of Rome*. It explains how the Jewish Messiah became Lord of the Gentiles.

Before Jesus ascended into heaven He gathered His disciples, and told them to go and make disciples of all nations. The book of Acts tells us how they did it!

It's absolutely crucial we study this book, for there's never been a more successful period of church history than the first church. In a single generation the Gospel was taken to the uttermost parts of the earth.

Just thirty years after the resurrection, Paul told the Colossians that the Gospel had gone out into “all the world...” In Thessalonica the Christian missionaries were accused of “turning the world upside down.”

And their success was without the 21st Century help of *technology* and *transportation*. The only *media* was pen and parchment. The Church had little *money* and no *marketing*. At the time 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 entitled “*Twister*,” was about a group of tornado chasers. One reason for the film’s success was it’s vivid and life-like special effects.

Shortly after its release, the movie was showing at a drive-in theater near Kansas City. One night during the movie, a real-life tornado swept through the theater ripping apart the screen, and destroying the concession area. *Talk about some realistic special effects!* That might’ve been too vivid for my tastes.

I bring this up though to direct our prayers. For over the next few months, as we study the outpouring of God’s Spirit and the growth of the early church, why not pray for God to bring to life what’s on the screen?

We have the same loving Father... the same Savior... the same Spirit... let’s ask for an Acts repeat!

The book of Acts begins, “The former account I made, O Theophilus...” Luke writes both his Gospel and Acts to a friend named “*Theophilus*.” Apparently, when he was born the

doctor said, “That’s **the-awfulist** looking baby I’ve ever seen.” And the name stuck.

Actually, the name “**Theophilus**” means “**friend of God.**” This fellow was possibly a Roman Official. Evidently a close friend of Luke and the early church.

Luke was a doctor who traveled with Paul as his personal physician. Later in the book of Acts he writes of Paul’s journeys in the first person. He was with Paul.

Luke was also a historian. He used the two years that Paul was in prison in Caesarea to canvass the region. He could’ve visited the Coast, 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, Theophilus, gets introduced to the newbies as the guy who gave us a quarter of the NT!

Luke says 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.**” He’d only just begun. There was much more to come... Some stories desperately deserve a sequel! And Luke’s trusty pen was ready.

Acts is the follow-up to the story in Luke’s Gospel.

It reminds me of the guy who went to see the movie, “**Malcolm X.**” He said the movie was so well done, he wished he had first taken the time to see 1 through 9.

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 was fulfilled in Acts.

Through the power of the Holy Spirit the disciples continued the works and teachings of Jesus.

Luke's sequel is called "**Acts of the Apostles,**" but it could've just as easily been "**Acts of the Holy Spirit.**" Jesus continues to do and teach... *even today.*

Acts 1:1, "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 four Gospels record only a few of the post-resurrection appearances of the risen Lord. But Luke assures us Jesus provided, "**many infallible proofs.**"

He knew the faith of future generations of Christians would hinge on the testimony of these eyewitnesses.

Thus, He made sure the evidence of His resurrection was so *undeniable and so irrefutable - so clear and so conclusive* - that none of the disciples would ever doubt its reality. *And not surprisingly, none of them did!*

Verse 4 tells us, "And being assembled together with *them*, He (Jesus) 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.”

In the OT Moses was given the most mammoth baby-sitting job in history. For forty years he cared for two million Jew-venile delinquents. *And he needed help...* Rather than deposit the Holy Spirit solely on Moses, God poured out His Spirit on seventy 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 wanted all of God’s people to have the power of the Holy Spirit.

And Moses’ wish became the Father’s promise.

Throughout the OT - *from Isaiah, to Jeremiah, to Ezekiel, to Joel* - God predicted the day would come when He would pour out His Spirit on all His people.

Now the time is near. The disciples are told to wait in Jerusalem until they’re “*baptized with the Holy Spirit.*”

And here's where terminology can trip us up...

On the subject of **the baptism of the Spirit** some of our Baptist brothers are quick to point to 1 Corinthians 12:13, “*For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.*” In other words, when a person becomes a Christian they’re initiated by the Spirit into the Body of Christ. Thus, Baptist-types claim

the *“baptism of the Spirit”* is synonymous with conversion - *but not so fast!*

Some words have multiple meanings. Take our English word *“bear.”* *It’s a grizzly. It’s carrying a load, or birthing a child, it’s endurance.* It’s lots of definitions.

And 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 got *“his baptism into the NFL.”*

But the word can also mean *“to dip, or engulf, or immerse.”* Thus, 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 being *engulfed or immersed* -like a water baptism - in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Here in Acts 1 Luke will refer to this experience with the Holy Spirit in five ways. As *“baptism”* - as *“reception”* - He *“comes upon”* - He *“fills”* - He’s *“poured out.”* My point is don’t get caught up in the *semantics* and miss the *dynamic*. Call it what you want, but we all need to be drenched in Holy Spirit power.

Verse 6 continues, *“Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”* The disciples were once again focused on Israeli politics. *When will Jesus assume the*

throne? Jesus will be king when He returns, but until then His kingdom will rule spiritually.

He'll rule in and over the hearts of men and women.

They'll better understand this when the power of the Holy Spirit comes upon them on the Day of Pentecost.

“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 God's plans for the future, because they lacked His power for the present... *That will change on the Day of Pentecost...*

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 will describe the Church's outreach into *Jerusalem...* In **Chapters 8-9** the Gospel goes to *Judea and Samaria*. Then in **Chapters 10-28** we see it going to *the end of the earth*. *And to fulfill such a grand commission the disciples will need supernatural help...*

Thus, Jesus promises that the Holy Spirit will come **“upon”** His disciples. This is the third of three experiences the NT teaches a believer can have with the Holy Spirit... In John 14 Jesus said the Spirit would be **“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 Holy Spirit comes to dwell **in** us...

But there's a third experience we can have, where the Holy Spirit comes **upon** us. He engulfs us with His love and power. This is what Jesus promises us here.

Recently, the folks at Carnival cruises learned an important lesson. On February 10, 2014 a fire broke out in the engine room of one of its ships, **the Triumph**.

The cruise ship lost power, and could no longer flush its toilets, cook its food, or cool its cabins. For the 4200 passengers and crew it was a disaster. Four days later the ship docked in Mobile Bay, ending the nightmare.

Three months later when **the Triumph** returned to sea it was outfitted with new emergency power generators. Carnival cruises has learned the hard way that **when the power goes out the party is over**.

And the same is true in the Christian life. With no power we're dead in the water. Life gets boring. Waste piles up. People starve. *It's not cool!* We need the power of the Holy Spirit to be what God wants us to be.

Every Christian has the Holy Spirit dwelling in them, but not all Christians have His power upon their lives!

And that's why we bomb, rather than become bold.

Corrie Ten Boon once put it this way, **"It takes two batteries to energize a flashlight: the first battery is regeneration, and the second battery is the baptism of the Holy Spirit."** Jesus said John baptized or immersed his followers with water, but

Jesus baptizes His followers with the awesome 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. After a long and excruciating journey, He returned home. It was like an astronaut re-entering the Earth’s atmosphere.

But for the disciples His ascension was a bewildering moment. They stood with dropped jaws - amazed at the sight - with all sorts of uncertainties in their head.

I’m sure at the top of their list of questions was, “*what’s next?*” *Jesus had overcome His enemies, and had risen from the dead, now He’s leaving them?*

The angel assures them, “*This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.*” In other words, you’ll see Him again. He’ll return *a second time*.

But there’s work to do in *the meantime!* The Gospel of Jesus needs to be spread to the ends of the earth.

The problem was these disciples weren’t ready. Though they’d *seen Jesus, heard Jesus, and learned from Jesus*, they weren’t ready. They needed power.

And so do you. You can be schooled, experienced, sincere - but if you don’t have His power you’ll lack what you need. The

disciples need the baptism of the Spirit, so Jesus tells them to go to Jerusalem and wait.

Verse 12, “Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey.” The Mount of Olives is east of Jerusalem - east of the Kidron Valley. It’s maybe a half mile walk back to the upper city and the upper room.

“And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were staying...” This was probably the same room where they ate the Last Supper. Tradition says it was the house of John Mark.

Luke tells us who was there... “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*.” With the exception of Judas (*the betrayer who hung himself*) all eleven disciples were present and accounted for.

“These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women (there were a group of women who had remained loyal to Jesus - Mary of Bethany, Salome, Mary Magdalene, and others) and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.”

And notice the mention of Jesus’ family. First, His mother, Mary. She’s now a follower of her Son. No one treated her as an object of veneration. She’s not over the disciples, just among them - *a fellow follower*.

And it’s noteworthy to find His brothers in the Upper Room. The last time we saw them, in John 7:5 it read, “even his

brothers did not believe in Him.” Apparently, the resurrection had opened their minds and changed their hearts. *Jesus’ brothers* were now *His believers*.

“And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples (altogether the number of names was about a 120) ...” Peter was definitely a leader in the group.

“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.

One prophecy, Psalm 69:25, renders the land desolate. The other, 109:8, predicts Judas’ succession.

And there’re a couple of points to clarify...

First, Matthew 27:7 tells us *the chief priests* paid for the potter's field, but since it was money they gave Judas, in Acts 2 Luke says *Judas* made the purchase.

Also, Matthew 27:5 tells us Judas hung himself. Here Luke tells us he fell and perforated his abdomen so that his guts poured out. Put the two accounts together, and Judas must’ve

hung himself, the limb snap, his body fall on the rocks, and his bloated bowels explode.

Now Peter discerns from Psalm 109 that Judas should be replaced. *It's noteworthy, that he and the early church were looking to the Scripture for guidance.*

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." Notice Peter's qualifications for the man to replace Judas and become the twelfth apostle...

First, was **longevity**. He needed to have followed Jesus from the start. For the whole 3.5 years. **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." They draw straws and it comes up Matthias.

To me, there's no doubt Peter was correct in his understanding that a replacement was needed, but once again Peter's impulsive nature may've caused him to jump the gun and select the wrong guy.

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 was his application wrong? *Was he being led by the Spirit?*

Casting lots was the equivalent of *rolling dice*. It was a game of chance. And after Pentecost it's never seen again in the NT as a means of discerning God's will.

From the coming of God's Spirit at Pentecost onward the Church relies totally on the guidance of the Spirit.

It's my opinion that Matthias was not God's choice to be the twelfth apostle. On the Road to Damascus Jesus will choose **Paul** as the "**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, "**fiftieth.**"

It was the fiftieth day - or seventh Sunday - after Passover. Pentecost was originally the Jewish Feast of Weeks or Harvest. It's celebrated near 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 in the Temple. *This was fitting symbolism...*

For on this Pentecost God will begin a harvest of souls - what we call "**the Church Age.**" And He does so by dedicating two bunches - both Jews and Gentiles.

Also the Jews observed this feast as the anniversary of the giving of the Law. The two sheaves were also symbolic of the two tablets of the ten commandments.

Again, it's fitting that on the day the Law was given to Israel, God poured out His grace on the Church. Here's more imagery... Exodus 32 says that on the day Moses received

the Law 3000 of the sons of Levi fell in judgment. In contrast, at the Feast of Pentecost God pours out His Spirit, and 3000 souls get saved.

We're told in 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 depicted as the wind. And as with the wind, you can't predict or chart the Spirit's movements. The wind has a mind and will of its own.

So it is with the Holy Spirit. He's a mystery. All you can do is trust Him and lift your sails in His direction.

An albatross is a strange bird. Its wing span is 12 feet, but its body weight makes it too heavy to take off on its own. When the wind is stationary it's grounded.

The bird stays airborne by gliding - *but wow, can an albatross glide!* Scientists strapped a radio transmitter on one albatross, and after 30 days and 9000 miles the battery died, but the bird was still over the ocean. It's estimated an albatross can stay at sea, years at a time.

And its secret is its ability to ride the wind... We too are like the albatross! We're grounded without the wind of the Spirit. Our wings are faith. And the only way for us to soar is stretch out and catch a gust of the Spirit.

And 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 in the Temple the flame was never repeated. Likewise, in Acts, the holy flares appear only once - the day the Church opens its doors.

Verse 4, “**And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.**”

With the *wind* and *fire* came a **filling**. God’s Spirit overwhelmed those who were waiting on His power. God rewarded their faith with a filling of His Holy Spirit.

“**And (they) began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.**” Understand, tongues is not a “*Learn A Language In Thirty Days*” program.

It’s not like Rosetta Stone. *The gift of tongues* is not a native dialect 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 for Him, His Spirit comes to my rescue. He places words in my mind that I might not understand, but I utter them by faith, trusting the Spirit that they are the exact representation of my feelings. And it provides me a release for my pent-up praise!

God knows all the 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 rushing wind), the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language.” The wind caught their attention, but the tongues, the miracle of language, stirred their imagination. At Pentecost the disciples praised God in a variety of Mediterranean languages, so that the visitors to Jerusalem recognized the Church’s praise in their own language. *They wondered how could this be?*

And notice the reversal. In Genesis 11 at the Tower of Babel, God confused the languages and scattered people... Here He reunites us by blessing us with the supernatural ability to speak His praise. *In our rebellion we were dispersed. In His praise we are reunited.*

Verse 7, “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** their own local language.

But now in the streets of Jerusalem visitors from all over the world are hearing Galilean Jews speaking in languages they themselves had 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.” The whole world was reunited in the praises of God. And it's a clue to us, *what it will take to bring folks back together today?* Only God's praise can unite us!

And notice the content of what was spoken. We're told they heard, “*The wonderful works of God.*” This is the gift tongues. It's always speaking praise to God.

If you travel in Charismatic circles you've heard the terminology, “a message in tongues.” Realize 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 1 Corinthians 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.

Verse 12, “So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “Whatever could this mean?” Others mocking said, “They are full of new wine.”

There were skeptics who wrote the disciples off as drunk. They thought the Christians had taken a *nip* of distilled spirits - rather than a *dip* in the Holy Spirit.

And apparently there're some similarities: *unbridled joy, uninhibited expression, unreserved boldness*. To be filled with the Spirit is to be filled with enthusiasm.

Years later, in 1 Peter 1:8, ole Pentecost Pete, still spoke of his "*rejoicing with joy inexpressible and full of glory*." The Spirit does provide us a supernatural buzz!

Verse 14, "*But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them...*" He provides 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 9:00 in the AM.

This is actually funny, and a bit revealing. Peter implies if it had been 9 PM you might assume some of the disciples had hit the sauce, but not 9 AM. Not even this rowdy crowd would get drunk before breakfast.

Here's Peter's point, **we're not drunk!** "*This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel...*" He quotes from what we know as Joel 2. This crowd had just witnessed a spiritual phenomena. Now Peter goes to chapter and verse to explain... "*This is what was spoken...*" In other words, *we're by the book*. All we do is Scriptural.

Some Charismatic groups excuse their emotionalism and sensationalism by saying, "*More can be cooked up in the kitchen than what appears on the menu.*" But to me this is lethal thinking. Make *experience* rather than *Scripture* the standard for the Church, and you open yourself up to deceptive and dangerous practices.

It's safer to point to chapter and verse (like Peter) and rest on a biblical basis. Extra-biblical experiences can steer us off track. We should **stick to the script!**

In verse 17 Peter quotes Joel 2, *'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God...'* Joel prophesied the Holy 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 the power and gifts of the Spirit were relegated to the first century, *and are not for today.*

The Spirit is to be unleashed in the *"the last days."*

God says, for in the last days, *"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."*

Recall Moses' wish, well, the day has come when the Spirit and His power are no longer the exclusive privilege of a chosen few.

Today, everyone - *young and old, male and female, Bulldog and Yellow Jacket* 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 last

judgment. They correspond with what we'll read about later in Revelation 6-19.

Remember Peter is addressing a Jewish audience.

And this is what it will eventually take to wake up the Jewish people. The global cataclysms of the Great Tribulation and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit will combine to bring salvation to the Jews of the last days.

Peter says, *“And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.”* Here Peter applies this verse to the Jews, but in Romans 10:13, Paul also quotes this verse for the Gentiles.

Peter begins a 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...”*

Wow, admire his boldness! What a difference the power of the Spirit makes. He had denied the Lord before this same crowd just a few days earlier. Now he stands up and accuses them of lawless murder.

Notice too how Peter obviously believed in **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.

He holds the Jews accountable, but He also knows that God was behind the scenes. He just makes no effort to reconcile the two views. Peter believes both.

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 (he 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’ flesh and bone body would never deteriorate - that is *“see corruption.”*

Psalm 16 is a biblical prediction of His resurrection.

Peter wraps up his quote of 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.

Peter continues his sermon by *drawing a conclusion and making an invitation*, “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.”

In Psalm 16, King David, the heir of the Messianic promises, predicted a risen Messiah. Peter argues that Jesus was the fulfillment of this prediction. *“This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses.”*

“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 declares that the Jesus they crucified is now sitting on the throne in heaven, and He’s now pouring out the power of the Holy Spirit on His Church.

The evidence He’s there, is what’s happening here.

“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. He says, “*David did not ascend...*” No one in the OT ascended to heaven until Jesus had paid our pardon. Their soul went to Hades to wait for Jesus to lead them into God’s presence.

And now the coming of the Holy Spirit was proof of Jesus’ heavenly arrival. Jesus promised His disciples that when He departed, He’d send *another Comforter*.

Pentecost was proof that Jesus’ word was good. The coming of the Comforter was evidence His sacrifice was accepted and He had taken His seat as Lord of all.

Roald Amundsen was a Norwegian explorer - the first man to discover the South Pole. On an expedition 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 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.” Again, what boldness!

Just a few days earlier Peter and his cohorts were hiding 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 cutting conviction. They were gripped by 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.” And notice the sequence...

First, you repent; and then you’re baptized.

This is why we reject infant baptism. A baby isn’t old enough to repent, *thus cannot be biblically baptized.*

Some denominations use verse 38 as a proof text for **baptismal regeneration** - that you’re not 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. 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.*

Commentator Warren Wiersbe blames the King James for confusing the translation here in verse 38.

Based on the Greek 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 are saved why not be baptized?*

Why wouldn't you want to be? This verse shows the priority the NT places on baptism. In the early church it was a natural progression - *repent, believe, baptized with water, and then filled with the Holy Spirit.* Salvation was a packaged deal. You got all the above at once.

Peter's phrasing of verse 38 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 committing, then waiting twenty years to follow it up with baptism. It's been said, *"An unbaptized believer is foreign to the book of Acts."*