

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

ACTS 1:1-2:39

What if the book of Acts didn't exist? After John's Gospel, you had "Paul's letter to the Church at Rome."

All kinds of questions would swirl through our heads... *How did the news of events on the outskirts of the empire get all the way to the capital 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 capital of Jerusalem to the Gentile capital 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!**

And it's crucial we study this book; for there's never been a more successful period of church history. Just thirty years after the resurrection, Paul told the Colossians the Gospel had gone into "**all the world.**"

And the 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 a church *building*. **The modern church desperately needs to recapture the power of the early church.**

“Twister” was the title of a 1996 blockbuster movie. It was about a group of tornado chasers. A reason for the film’s success was its 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, destroying the concession area. *Talk about some realistic special effects!*

I bring this up 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?* The same Holy Spirit lives in us. **Let’s ask for an Acts sequel!**

The book begins, **“The former account I made, O Theophilus...”** Luke writes both his Gospel and Acts to a friend named, **“Theophilus.”** When this man was born, the doctor shouted, **“That’s the-awfulist looking baby I’ve ever seen.”** And the name stuck, **“Theophilus.”**

Actually, the name means **“friend of God.”** He may’ve been a government official and an ally of Christianity.

Luke was a doctor who traveled with Paul as his personal physician. He was also a historian. During the two years Paul was imprisoned in Caesarea, he may’ve combed the Galilee,

Samaria, Jerusalem - interviewing eyewitnesses - 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 may be introduced as the guy who gave us a quarter of the New Testament!

In verse 1, Luke says of his Gospel, it was “**the former account... of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up...**”

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 four Gospels record just a few of the post-resurrection appearances of the risen Lord. But Luke assures us Jesus provided, “**many infallible proofs.**”

Jesus 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 biggest baby-sitting job in history. For forty years, he cared for two million *Jew-veniles*. *And he needed God’s help...* But rather than deposit His Spirit solely on Moses, God poured out His Spirit on seventy elders. And this decentralization of spiritual power concerned Moses’ apprentice, Joshua. He thought, “*what if common folk start thinking that they too can possess 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 God’s people to have the power of the Holy Spirit.

And Moses’ wish became the Father’s promise.

Throughout the Old Testament, *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. His disciples are 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 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 are initiated by the Spirit into the Body of Christ. Thus, folks in the Baptist camp claim the “*baptism of the Spirit*” is synonymous with conversion - *but not so fast!*

Terms often have multiple meanings. Take the English word **"bear."** *It's a grizzly, or carrying a load, or birthing a child, or enduring the heat.* It has 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**. With Paul, to be baptized by the Spirit is to become part of the Body of Christ... But when **Luke, Jesus,** and **Peter** use the term they are speaking of being **immersed** in the power of the 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 set up a physical throne?* They still hadn't grasped that He first reigns and rules spiritually - in 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 God’s plan for the future, because they lacked His power for the present. They’ll better understand God’s purposes when the Spirit is poured out 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.” In verse 8, Jesus provided them a **power**, a **purpose**, and a **plan**. The **power** is His Spirit. Our **purpose** is to be witnesses. The **plan** is to spread out from Jerusalem into all the earth.

And verse 8 becomes an outline for the book...

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...*

That’s why Jesus promises the Holy Spirit will come “**upon**” His disciples with power. Remember in John 14, Jesus said the Spirit will be “**with**” us and “**in**” us.

Before we’re saved, the Spirit is **with** us; convicting us of sin and drawing us to the Savior... When we believe, the Spirit comes to dwell **in** us... But there’s a third experience we can have - when the Spirit comes **upon** us. He engulfs us with His love and His power.

I heard of a Carnival cruise that had a fire on board. The ship lost power. Toilets wouldn't flush. The AC didn't work. Food couldn't be cooked. For the 4000-plus passengers and crew, it was a nightmare.

And everyone at Carnival cruises learned a strategic lesson. **When the power goes out, the party is over.** And the same is true for a Christian. With no power, we're dead in the water. Life gets hard. *It's not cool!*

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

Corrie Ten Boon once put it, "It takes two batteries to energize a flashlight: the first battery is regeneration, and the second battery is the baptism of the Holy Spirit." Every Christian needs the power of God's 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. Like an astronaut after a long voyage re-entering the earth's atmosphere, Jesus is now returning home to heaven.

But for the disciples, His ascension was bewildering. All kinds of uncertainties swirled in their heads. And at the top of their list, was the question, "what's next?" Jesus had overcome and had risen, *now He's leaving?*

Yet 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.**” You’ll see Him again. He’ll come *a second time*, but in the *meantime*, there’s work to do! And the problem was the disciples weren’t ready. They’d *seen Jesus, heard Jesus, learned from Jesus*, but they still lacked power.

You can be schooled, and experienced, and sincere; yet if you lack the power of His Spirit you won’t be an effective witness. 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.**” It was a half-mile walk back to the upper city. “**And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were staying...**” This was probably the room that hosted the Last Supper. Tradition says it was the house of John Mark.

And 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*.**” The one missing disciple was Judas, *the betrayer*. The other eleven disciples were all present and accounted for.

“**These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women** (there was also a group of women who were loyal to Jesus - *Mary of Bethany, Salome, Mary Magdalene, and others*). Luke also mentions Jesus’ family. “**And Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.**”

Notice His mother, Mary, is now a follower of her Son. And no one in the early church treated Mary with any undue veneration. She wasn't over the disciples, just among them - **a fellow follower.**

And it's noteworthy to also find His brothers in the Upper Room. John 7:5 told us, "his brothers did not believe in Him." But His resurrection opened their mind and changed their heart. *Brothers became 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 (69:25): '*Let his dwelling place be desolate, and let no one live in it*'; and (109:8), '*Let another take his office.*'"

The parcel where Judas died will be barren land, and Judas will be succeeded among the twelve by another.

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

First, Matthew 27:7 says *the chief priests* paid for the potter's field, but since it was the money they gave to Judas in Acts 1, Luke says *Judas* made the purchase.

Also, Matthew 27:5 tells us Judas hung himself, while Luke says he fell and perforated his abdomen so that his guts oozed out. Put the accounts together, and Judas must've hung himself, the limb snapped, his body fell on the rocks, and his bloated bowels exploded.

But the point is, Peter is taking his cues from the Scripture. In reading Psalm 109, he realizes Judas should be replaced... And this is where today's church needs to be getting its guidance - *from the Bible!*

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 apostle...

First, was **longevity**. An apostle should have followed Jesus from the start - for the whole 3.5 years. **Second**, he should 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." No doubt Peter was correct to replace Judas, but

again his impulsive nature may've caused him to jump the gun and select the wrong guy...

Casting lots was basically *a roll of the dice*. After the outpouring of the Spirit, it's never again used as a way of discerning God's will. From Pentecost onward, the Church relied totally on the guidance of the Holy 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 for "fiftieth." It was the fiftieth day - or seventh Sunday - after Passover. Pentecost was the Jewish Feast of Weeks or Harvest.

It occurred the end of May after the spring harvest. In the Temple, two sheaves of wheat were offered to God. This was fitting symbolism, for at Pentecost, God began a harvest of souls that we call "the Church Age", which included two bundles, 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.

And again, it's fitting that on the day the Law was given to Israel, God poured out His grace on the Church. Interestingly, Exodus 32 records 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."

The Greek word "*Spirit*" or *pneuma* means wind. And as with the wind, you can't predict or chart the Holy Spirit's movements. He has a will of His own. All we can do is trust Him and lift our sails in His direction.

An albatross has a wingspan of 12 feet, but its body weight makes it too heavy to take off on its own. It needs the wind or it's grounded. It stays airborne by gliding - *but wow, can he glide!* Scientists strapped a radio transmitter to one albatross, and after 30 days and 9000 miles the battery died, but the bird was still in the air. An albatross can stay at sea years at a time.

And a Christian is like an albatross! We're grounded without the Spirit. Our wings are faith. And the way we soar is to stretch out and catch a gust of God's Spirit.

But along with the wind, came the fire! "Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire (or flickers of a flame), and one sat upon each of them."

In the Old Testament when Moses dedicated the Tabernacle, God sent fire from heaven to consume the sacrifice... It occurred again when Solomon dedicated the Temple... Now a new, spiritual Temple is dedicated, in which we are its living stones and living sacrifices, and again at its inauguration, fire falls from heaven!

In the Tabernacle and Temple, the fire from heaven was never repeated. Likewise, in Acts, the holy flames appear just once - the day the Church opens its doors.

But what is repeated over and over is what we read about next, verse 4, **“They were all filled with the Holy Spirit.”** God’s Spirit overflowed those who were waiting. 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.” Now understand, the gift of tongues is not a *native dialect* or *learned language*. It may not even be a *known or earthly language*. 1 Corinthians 13 mentions, **“the tongues of men and angels.”** Tongues can be angelic language.

But what is the gift of tongues? Well, when my heart is so full of praise to God that I can’t find the words to express my love for Him, His Spirit will come to my rescue. He’ll place words in my mind, I might not know, but if I utter those words by faith - trusting the Spirit to make them the exact representation of my feelings; then **it provides me a release for all my pent-up praise!**

It’s like popping the cork on a champagne bottle.

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 stirred their imagination. The disciples praised God in a variety of Mediterranean languages so that the visitors recognized the Church’s praise in their own native tongue. *They wondered how could this be?*

And note the reversal. In Genesis 11 at the Tower of Babel, God confused the languages to scatter people...But here He brings people together by blessing them with a supernatural ability to speak His praise. **In our rebellion, we’re dispersed. In His praise, we’re 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 streets of Jerusalem, visitors were hearing Galilean Jews speak in languages they had no way of knowing.

“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. They heard, “*The wonderful works of God.*” This is **the gift of tongues**. It’s always speaking praise to God.

If you travel in Charismatic circles, you've heard the terminology, "a message in tongues." Well, it's 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."

Skeptics said the disciples were drunk. They'd taken a *nip* of distilled spirits, rather than a *dip* in God's Spirit.

But apparently, there're some similarities: *unbridled joy, uninhibited expression, unintimidated boldness*.

To be filled with the Spirit is to be totally enthused with God.

Verse 14, "But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "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."

This is actually funny and a bit revealing. Implied is if it were 9 PM there might be a reason to believe some of the disciples had hit the sauce, but it's 9 AM. Not even these rowdy disciples got drunk before breakfast.

Rather than drunk, Peter explains, "This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel..." And quotes from Joel 2.

These onlookers had seen a spiritual phenomenon. But Peter goes to chapter and verse to explain. *"This is what was spoken..."* In other words, *we're by the book*. All that the Church did and experienced was Scriptural.

Some Charismatic groups excuse their emotionalism and sensationalism by saying, *"More can be cooked up in the kitchen than what's on the menu."* In other words, God doesn't limit His work to what's scriptural.

But to me, this is lethal thinking. Make *experience* not *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 (*as Peter did*). Rely on biblical precedent. 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...'* And if Peter thought of *his day* as *"the last days,"* how much more do his words apply to us? Never let anyone tell you the power and gifts of the Spirit were relegated to the first century, *and not for today*. The Spirit moves in *"the last days."*

For God says, 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...

The power of God's Spirit is no longer exclusive to a chosen few. Today, we all can *be filled with His 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 the Prophet Joel’s images of God’s last day’s judgment. They correspond with what we read in **Revelation 6-19**.

Recall Peter is addressing a Jewish audience. And this is what wakes up the Jews of the last days. The global cataclysms of the Great Tribulation combine with the Spirit’s outpouring to bring salvation to the Jews.

Verse 21, *“And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.”*

Then Peter gets personal, *“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, what boldness! This was Peter who denied His Lord in front of a little girl. Now he stands before the Jews who crucified Jesus and accuses them of murder.

Notice too how Peter believed in **divine sovereignty and human responsibility**. The crucifixion was the result of *God’s preordained will and man’s evil choices*.

Peter 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.

Then 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 or “*see corruption.*” Psalm 16 is a biblical prediction of Jesus’ resurrection.

He wraps up his quote, “*You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence.*” He prophesies that Jesus will return to God.

And Peter draws a conclusion, “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.”

David wasn’t predicting *his* own resurrection. He was dead and entombed. He foresaw a risen Messiah. Verse 32, David’s prophecy was fulfilled in “*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.” The Jesus they crucified is now sitting at God’s right hand, on God’s throne in heaven, and He’s 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 is quoting **Psalm 110:1**. “*David did not ascend*” No one in the Old Testament ascended to heaven until Jesus had paid our pardon. Their souls went to Hades to wait for the Savior to lead them into God’s presence.

And now the coming of God’s Spirit was proof of Jesus’ arrival in heaven. He promised His disciples that when He departed, He would send *another Comforter*.

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

Roald Amundsen was a Norwegian explorer - the first man to reach the South Pole. On one expedition, he took a homing pigeon and set it loose when he reached his destination. Imagine his wife’s joy when that bird arrived on her windowsill in Norway. She knew her husband was alive. His mission was accomplished.

This was the message of Pentecost. The dove of the Spirit said to Jesus’ bride, He reached His destination!

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!*

Peter had been in hiding, unwilling to step outside for fear of the Jews. Now, he’s toe to toe with the same authorities who engineered Jesus’ execution. He jabs them with the truth: *“this Jesus, whom you crucified.”*

This isn’t the same man. Meet a new Peter. 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.” *What do you do when you’re convicted of rejecting Jesus?* First, repent. Stop resisting and start following Jesus. Then get baptized.

This is why we reject infant baptism. A baby isn’t old enough to repent, and repentance precedes baptism.

Some denominations use verse 38 as a proof text for **baptismal regeneration** - that you have to be baptism to be saved. Yet examine the whole of Scripture and this can’t be true. The thief on the cross wasn’t baptized. And Paul told the Corinthians he didn’t come to baptize but to preach the

Gospel. Thus, the two are not the same. Salvation is by faith in Christ alone.

The New Testament never portrays baptism as essential, but as sequential. It was a step in the process early Christians used to identify with Jesus.

You repented, believed, got baptized, and were filled with the Spirit. It was a package deal. You were **all in.**

Peter's phrasing of verse 38 reflects the fact he sees repentance and baptism as a unit. One naturally followed the other, so *why bother to separate them?*

It's true that in the early church when you came to Jesus you usually went home wet. It's been said, **"An unbaptized believer is foreign to the book of Acts."**