

FBC Canton Sunday am April 12, 2026

Define the Win Acts 2:41-47

Introduction: How do you know the church is winning?

What is a church? Called out people to publicly call to the culture the message of the Gospel.

Tony Evans defines the church as a community of individuals spiritually linked together with the purpose of reflecting and spreading the values of the kingdom of God.

He emphasizes that the church is not just a gathering of strangers but a group of people called out to bring Heaven's viewpoint into history and enact God's kingdom agenda.

Called that first here.

This passage defines clearly what is the win for the church!

I. The win is an Identity Change. V. 41-42

a. Freely and joyfully received. The completed work of Jesus for our sins!

i. Born again changes us from the inside out. John 3

1. From self to the savior. I Corinthians 6:9-11

9 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, 10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

2. You did life your way, now you will do it God's way.

b. Instant conversion leads to immediate expression.

i. Died to the old life, resurrected to the new life in Christ. Romans 6:1-4

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? 3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

c. Be theologically curious. Acts 17:10-12 you cannot know what is true and what is false in this world without ready the Word for yourself.

i. Continue steadfastly, not coerced sporadically.

- ii. In the word, not of the world.

Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. 11 These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.

d. Be partners, not consumers.

e. Be memorable, because forgetting destroys gratitude.

f. Be persistent in prayers, not pessimistic.

II. Identity change, changes life. v. 43-47

a. Fear of the Lord, not fear of man. Acts 9:31

Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied.

b. Amazed at what God is doing, means you have to be in attendance.

c. Common concern, not involuntary coercion.

- i. Sharing amongst ourselves is not socialism, it is evidence of trusting God's provision.

d. Daily: in one accord....

i. Unity of the Spirit, not conformity to a system. Ephesians 4:1-6-

- 1. Unity is the natural condition of Holy Spirit followers. If disunity exists it is the evidence of lack of Spirit followers.

ii. Life:

1. Exuberant joy, not exaltation of self.

2. Sincerely true, not sincerely drinking poison.

3. Praising is what we ought to be doing, not complaining.

4. You cannot make disciples without salvations. Matthew 28:16-20

Conclusion: All the people noticed the impact of that church. What about ours?

David Guzik

Study Guide for Acts 2

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS POURED OUT ON THE CHURCH

A. The initial experience of the filling of the Holy Spirit.

1. (Acts 2:1-4a) The disciples are filled with the Holy Spirit.

When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.

a. **The Day of Pentecost**: This was a Jewish feast held 50 days after Passover. It celebrated the firstfruits of the wheat harvest.

- i. In the Jewish rituals of that time, the first sheaf reaped from the barley harvest was presented to God at Passover. But at Pentecost, the firstfruits of the wheat harvest were presented to God; therefore, Pentecost is called *the day of the firstfruits* (Numbers 28:26).
- ii. Jewish tradition also taught that **Pentecost** marked the day when the Law was given to Israel. The Jews sometimes called **Pentecost** *zman matan torah*, or “the season of the giving of the law.”
- iii. On the Old Testament **Day of Pentecost** Israel received the Law; on the New Testament **Day of Pentecost** the Church received the Spirit of Grace in fullness.
- iv. “It was the best-attended of the great feasts because traveling conditions were at their best. There was never a more cosmopolitan gathering in Jerusalem than this one.” (Hughes)
- v. [Leviticus 23:15-22](#) gives the original instructions for the celebration of Pentecost. It says that two loaves of *leavened* bread were to be waved before the Lord by the priest as part of the celebration. “Were there not two loaves? Not only shall Israel be saved, but the multitude of the Gentiles shall be turned unto the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Spurgeon)

b. **When the Day of Pentecost had fully come**: It was now 10 days after the time Jesus ascended to heaven ([Acts 1:3](#)), and since Jesus commanded them to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit.

i. The disciples were not strangers to the person and work of the Holy Spirit.

- The disciples saw the Holy Spirit continually at work in the ministry of Jesus.

- The disciples experienced something of the power of the Spirit as they stepped out and served God ([Luke 10:1-20](#)).
- The disciples heard Jesus promise a new, coming work of the Holy Spirit ([John 14:15-18](#)).
- The disciples received the Holy Spirit in a new way after Jesus finished His work on the cross and instituted the New Covenant in His blood ([John 20:19-23](#)).
- The disciples heard Jesus command them to wait for a promised baptism of the Holy Spirit that would empower them to be witnesses ([Acts 1:4-5](#)).

ii. They waited until **the Day of Pentecost had fully come**, but they didn't know ahead of time how long they would have to wait. It would be easy for them to think it would come the same afternoon Jesus ascended to heaven; or after 3 days, or 7 days. But they had to wait a full 10 days, until **the Day of Pentecost had fully come**.

iii. The only possible Scriptural precedent for this might be [Jeremiah 42:7](#): *Ten days later the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah*. But who would have suspected that? God used this time to break them down and then to build them up. We can imagine how their patience and kindness and compassion was tested during this time, yet they all stayed together.

iv. What this passage tells us about the gift of the Holy Spirit.

- The gift of the Holy Spirit is promised to us.
- The gift of the Holy Spirit is worth waiting for.
- The gift of the Holy Spirit comes as He wills, often not according to our expectation.
- The gift of the Holy Spirit can come upon not only individuals, but also upon groups (see also [Acts 2:4](#), [4:31](#), [10:44](#)).
- The gift of the Holy Spirit is often given as God deals with the flesh and there is a dying to self.

v. What this passage does *not* tell us about the gift of the Holy Spirit.

- The gift of the Holy Spirit is given according to formula.
- We earn the gift of the Holy Spirit by our seeking.

c. **They were all with one accord in one place**: They were gathered together sharing the same heart, the same love for God, the same trust in His promise, and the same geography.

i. Before we can be filled, we must recognize our emptiness; by gathering together for prayer, in obedience, these disciples did just that. They recognized they did not have the resources in themselves to do what they could do or should do; they had to instead rely on the work of God.

d. **Suddenly there came a sound from heaven**: The association of the sound of a **rushing mighty wind**, filling the **whole house**, with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is unusual. But it probably has connection with the fact that in both the Hebrew and Greek languages, the word for **spirit** (as in **Holy Spirit**) is the same word for **breath** or **wind** (this also happens to be true in Latin). Here, the **sound from heaven** was the sound of the Holy Spirit being poured out on the disciples.

i. The **sound** of this fast, **mighty wind** would make any of these men and women who knew the Hebrew Scriptures think of the presence of the Holy Spirit.

- In **Genesis 1:1-2**, it is the Spirit of God as the breath/wind of God, blowing over the waters of the newly created earth.
- In **Genesis 2:7**, it is the Spirit of God as the breath/wind of God, blowing life into newly created man.
- In **Ezekiel 37:9-10**, it is the Spirit of God as the breath/wind of God, moving over the dry bones of Israel bringing them life and strength.

ii. This single line tells us much about how the Holy Spirit moves.

- **Suddenly**: Sometimes God moves suddenly.
- **Sound**: It was real, though it could not be touched; it came by the ears.
- **From heaven**: It wasn't of earth; not created or manipulated or made here.
- **Mighty**: Full of force, coming with great power.

e. **There appeared to them divided tongues as of fire, and one sat upon each of them**: These **divided tongues, as of fire**, appearing over each one, were also unusual. It probably should be connected with John the Baptist's prophecy that Jesus would **baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire** (**Matthew 3:11**).

i. The idea behind the picture of **fire** is usually purification, as a refiner uses fire to make pure gold; or fire can burn away what is temporary, leaving only what will last. This is an excellent illustration of the principle that the filling of the Holy Spirit is not just for abstract power, but for **purity**.

ii. In certain places in the Old Testament, God showed His special pleasure with a sacrifice by lighting the fire for it Himself — that is, fire from heaven came down and consumed the sacrifice. The experience of the followers of Jesus on Pentecost is another example of God sending fire from heaven to show His pleasure and power, but this time, it descended upon **living sacrifices** (**Romans 12:1**).

iii. The Holy Spirit **sat upon each of them**. "The word 'sat' has a marked force in the New Testament. It carries the idea of a **completed preparation**, and a certain **permanence of position and condition**." (Pierson)

iv. Under the Old Covenant, the Holy Spirit rested on God's people more as a **nation**, that is, Israel. But under the New Covenant, the Holy Spirit rests upon God's people as **individuals** — the tongues of fire **sat upon each of them**. This strange phenomenon had never happened before and would never happen again in the pages of the Bible, but was given to emphasize this point: that the Spirit of God was present with and in and upon **each individual**.

f. **And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit**: Essentially, the **rushing mighty wind** and the **tongues, as of fire**, were only unusual, temporary phenomenon, which accompanied the true gift — being **filled with the Holy Spirit**.

i. While it would be wrong to expect a **rushing mighty wind** or **tongues, as of fire**, to be present today when the Holy Spirit is poured out, we can experience the true gift. We, just as they, can be **all filled with the Holy Spirit**.

ii. But we should do what the disciples did before and during their filling with the Holy Spirit.

- The disciples were filled *in fulfillment of a promise*.
- They were filled as they *received in faith*.
- They were filled *in God's timing*.
- They were filled *as they were together in unity*.
- They were filled *in unusual ways*.

iii. This coming and filling of the Holy Spirit was so good, so essential for the work of the community of early Christians, that Jesus actually said that it was **better** for Him to leave the earth bodily so He could send the Holy Spirit ([John 16:7](#)).

2. ([Acts 2:4b-13](#)) The phenomenon of speaking in tongues.

And began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. 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? 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." So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "Whatever could this mean?" Others mocking said, "They are full of new wine."**

a. **And began to speak with other tongues**: In response to the filling of the Holy Spirit, those present (not only the twelve apostles) **began to speak with other tongues**. These were

languages that they were never taught, and they spoke these languages, speaking **as the Spirit gave them utterance**.

b. **Devout men, from every nation under heaven**: The multitude from many nations gathered in Jerusalem because of the Feast of Pentecost. Many of these were the same people who gathered in Jerusalem at the last feast, Passover, when an angry mob demanded the execution of Jesus.

c. **And when this sound occurred**: A crowd quickly gathered, being attracted by **this sound**, which was either the sound of the *rushing mighty wind* or the sound of speaking in **other tongues**. When the crowd came, they heard the Christians speaking in their own foreign languages. Apparently, the Christians could be heard from the windows of the upper room, or they went out onto some kind of balcony or into the temple courts.

i. Not many homes of that day could hold 120 people. It is far more likely that this upper room was part of the temple courts, which was a huge structure, with porches and colonnades and rooms. The crowd came from people milling about the temple courts.

d. **We hear them speaking in our tongues the wonderful works of God**: This is what the crowd heard the Christians speak. From this remarkable event, **all** were **amazed and perplexed**, but **some** used it as a means of honest inquiry and asked, **“Whatever could this mean?”** **Others** used it as an excuse to dismiss the work of God and said, **“They are full of new wine.”**

i. **Look, are not all these who speak Galileans?** People from Galilee (**Galileans**) were known to be uncultured and poor speakers. This was all the more reason to be impressed with their ability to speak eloquently in other languages. “Galileans had difficulty pronouncing gutturals and had the habit of swallowing syllables when speaking; so they were looked down upon by the people of Jerusalem as being provincial.” (Longenecker)

ii. They all spoke in different tongues, yet there was a unity among the believers. “Ever since the early church fathers, commentators have seen the blessing of Pentecost as a deliberate and dramatic reversal of the curse of Babel.” (Stott)

e. **Whatever could this mean?** What are we to make of the phenomenon of speaking in tongues? Speaking in tongues has been the focal point for significant controversy in the church. People still ask the same question these bystanders asked on the day of Pentecost.

i. There is no controversy that God, at least at one time, gave the church the gift of tongues. But much of the controversy centers on the question, “what is God’s **purpose** for the gift of tongues?”

ii. Some think that the gift of tongues was given primarily as a sign to unbelievers (**1 Corinthians 14:21-22**) and as a means to miraculously communicate the gospel in diverse

languages. They believe there is no longer the need for this sign, so they regard tongues as a gift no longer present in the church today.

iii. Others argue that the gift of tongues, while a sign to unbelievers as stated by [1 Corinthians 14:21-22](#), are *primarily* a gift of communication between the believer and God ([1 Corinthians 14:2, 13-15](#)), and is a gift still given by God today.

iv. Many mistakenly interpret this incident in [Acts 2](#), assuming that the disciples used tongues to preach to the gathered crowd. But a careful look shows this idea is wrong. Notice what the people heard the disciples say: **Speaking... the wonderful works of God**. The disciples declared the praises of God, thanking Him with all their might in unknown tongues. The gathered crowd merely *overheard* what the disciples exuberantly declared to God.

v. The idea that these disciples communicated to the diverse crowd in tongues is plainly wrong. The crowd *had* a common language (Greek), and Peter preached a sermon to them in that language! ([Acts 2:14-40](#))

f. **We hear them speaking in our tongues the wonderful works of God**: The gift of tongues *is* a personal language of prayer given by God, whereby the believer communicates with God beyond the limits of knowledge and understanding ([1 Corinthians 14:14-15](#)).

i. The Gift of Tongues has an important place in the devotional life of the believer, but a small place in the corporate life of the church ([1 Corinthians 14:18-19](#)), especially in public meetings ([1 Corinthians 14:23](#)).

ii. When tongues *is* practiced in the corporate life of the church, it must be carefully controlled, and never without an interpretation given by the Holy Spirit ([1 Corinthians 14:27-28](#)).

iii. The ability to pray in an unknown tongue is not a gift given to every believer ([1 Corinthians 12:30](#)).

iv. The ability to pray in an unknown tongue is *not* the primary or singularly true evidence of the filling of the Holy Spirit. This emphasis leads many to seek the gift of tongues (and to counterfeit it) merely to prove to themselves and others that they really are filled with the Holy Spirit.

g. **Began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance**: Was this speaking in tongues in [Acts 2](#) the same *gift of tongues* described in [1 Corinthians 12](#) and [14](#)?

i. Some say we are dealing with two separate gifts. They argue that the [1 Corinthians](#) gift must be regulated and restricted, while the [Acts 2](#) gift can be used any time without regulation. Those who believe they are two separate gifts emphasize that the speech of [Acts 2](#) was immediately recognized by foreign visitors to Jerusalem, while the speech of [1 Corinthians](#) was unintelligible to those present except with a divinely granted gift of interpretation.

- ii. However, this doesn't take into account that the differences have more to do with the circumstances in which the gifts were exercised than with the gifts themselves.
- iii. In Jerusalem, the group spoken to was uniquely multi-national and multi-lingual; at least time (Pentecost), Jews of the dispersion from all over the world were in the city. Therefore, the likelihood that foreign ears would hear a tongue spoken in their language was much greater. On the other hand, in Corinth (though a rather cosmopolitan city itself), the gift was exercised in a local church, with members all sharing a common language (Greek). If one had the same diversity of foreigners visiting the Corinthian church when all were speaking in tongues, it is likely that many would hear members of the Corinthian church speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.
- iv. As well, it should never be assumed that each person among the 120 who spoke in tongues on the Day of Pentecost spoke in a language immediately intelligible to human ears present that day. We read they all...began to speak with other tongues; therefore there were some 120 individuals speaking in tongues. Since the nations spoken of in Acts 2:9-11 number only fifteen (with perhaps others present but not mentioned), it is likely that many (if not most) of the 120 spoke praises to God in a language that was not understood by someone immediately present. The text simply does not indicate that someone present could understand each person speaking in tongues.
- v. However, we should not assume those who were not immediately understood by human ears spoke "gibberish," as the modern gift of tongues is sometimes called with derision. They may have praised God in a language completely unknown, yet completely human. After all, what would the language of the Aztecs sound like to Roman ears? Or some may have spoke in a completely unique language given by God and understood by Him and Him alone. After all, communication with God, not man, is the purpose of the gift of tongues (1 Corinthians 14:2). The repetition of simple phrases, unintelligible and perhaps nonsensical to human bystanders, does not mean someone speaks "gibberish." Praise to God may be simple and repetitive, and part of the whole dynamic of tongues is that it bypasses the understanding of the speaker (1 Corinthians 14:14), being understood by God and God alone.
- vi. All in all, we should regard the gift of Acts 2 and the gift of tongues in 1 Corinthians as the same, simply because the same term is used for both in the original language (heterais glossais). Also, the verb translated gave them utterance in Acts 2:4 is frequently used in Greek literature in connection with spiritually prompted (ecstatic) speech, not mere translation into other languages.

B. Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost.

1. (Acts 2:14-15) Peter begins his sermon.

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.”

a. **Peter, standing up with the eleven**: Peter stood and preached to the crowd as a representative of the whole group of apostles.

i. We should notice that the speaking in tongues stopped when Peter began to preach. The Holy Spirit now worked through Peter’s preaching and would not work against Himself through tongues at the same time.

b. **Raised his voice**: There was a remarkable change in Peter. He had courage and boldness that was a complete contrast to his denials of Jesus before being filled with the Holy Spirit.

i. On the Day of Pentecost Peter didn’t teach as the rabbis in his day usually did, who gathered disciples around them, sat down, and instructed them and any others who might listen. Instead, Peter proclaimed the truth like a herald.

ii. This remarkable sermon had no preparation behind it — it was spontaneously given. Peter didn’t wake up that morning knowing he would preach to thousands, and that thousands would embrace Jesus in response. Yet we could say that this was a well-prepared sermon; it was prepared by Peter’s prior life with God and relationship with Jesus. It flowed spontaneously out of that life, and out of a mind that thought and believed deeply.

iii. It is good to remember that what we have in Acts 2 is a small portion of what Peter actually said. Acts 2:40 tells us, And with many other words he testified and exhorted them. Like almost all the sermons recorded in the Bible, what we have is a Holy Spirit inspired abridgment of a longer message.

c. **For these are not drunk**: Peter deflected the mocking criticism that the disciples were drunk. In that day it was unthinkable that people would be so drunk so early in the day (about 9:00 in the morning).

i. Commentator Adam Clarke says that most Jews — pious or not — did not eat or drink until after the **third hour of the day**, because that was the time for prayer, and they would only eat after their business with God was accomplished.

d. **These are not drunk**: We shouldn’t think that the Christians were acting as if they were drunk. The idea of “being drunk in the Spirit” has no foundation in Scripture; the comment from the mockers on the Day of Pentecost had no basis in reality.

i. “Nor, must we add, did the believers’ experience of the Spirit’s fullness seem to them or look to others like intoxication, because they had lost control of their normal mental and physical functions. No, the fruit of the Spirit is ‘self-control,’ not the loss of it.” (Stott)

2. (Acts 2:16-21) Quoting Joel 2, Peter explains the strange events at Pentecost.

“But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

**‘And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God,
That 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.
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.
And it shall come to pass
That whoever calls on the name of the LORD
Shall be saved.’**

a. **But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel**: In the midst of this great outpouring of the Holy Spirit, among signs and wonders and speaking in tongues, what did Peter do? Essentially, he said, “Let’s have a Bible study. Let’s look at what **the prophet Joel** wrote.”

- i. This introduces the first of three Old Testament passages Peter will quote: [Joel 2:28-32](#), [Psalm 16:8-11](#), and [Psalm 110:1](#).
- ii. This focus on God’s Word did not quench the moving of the Holy Spirit; it fulfilled what the Holy Spirit wanted to do. All the signs and wonders and speaking in tongues were preparing for this work of God’s Word.
- iii. Unfortunately, some people set the Word against the Spirit. They almost think it’s more spiritual if there is no Bible study. Sadly, this is often due to the weak and unspiritual teaching of some who teach the Bible.

b. **The prophet Joel**: This quotation from [Joel 2:28-32](#) focuses on God’s promise to pour out His Spirit on all flesh. What happened on the day of Pentecost was a **near** fulfillment of that promise, with the **final** fulfillment coming in the last days (which Peter had good reason to believe he was in).

i. Joel mostly prophesied about judgment that was coming to ancient Israel. Yet in the midst of the many warnings of judgment, God also gave several words of promise — promises of future blessing, like this one that announces an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

c. **It shall come to pass in the last days**: The idea of the **last days** is that they are the times of the Messiah, encompassing both His humble coming and His return in glory. Because Jesus had already come in humility, they were aware that His return in glory could be any time.

i. Though there would be some 2,000 years until Jesus returned, until this point, history had been running **towards** the point of the ultimate establishment of God's kingdom on earth. But from this time on, history runs **parallel** to that point, ready at any time for the consummation.

ii. It may also be helpful to see the **last days** as something like a season — a general period of time — more than a specific **period**, such as a week. In the whole span of God's plan for human history, we are in the season of the **last days**.

iii. "Peter did not say of that pentecostal enduement, 'Now **is fulfilled** that which was spoken by the prophet Joel,' but, more guardedly, '**This is that** which was spoken;' that is to say, Joel's words furnish the **explanation** of this first Pentecost, though this does not finish their **fulfillment**." (Pierson)

d. **I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh**: In using the quotation from Joel, Peter explained what these curious onlookers saw — the Holy Spirit poured forth upon the people. Before the Holy Spirit was given in drops, now He is **poured** forth — and **on all flesh**.

i. This was a glorious emphasis on Pentecost. Under the Old Covenant, certain people were filled with the Spirit at certain times for specific purposes. Now, under the New Covenant, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is for all who call upon the name of the LORD, even **menservants** and **maidservants**.

ii. "There had been no provision for, and no promise of, an abiding presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of any Old Testament saint." (Hughes). This changes under the New Covenant.

e. **Whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved**: Peter also used this passage from Joel to an evangelistic purpose. This outpouring of the Holy Spirit meant that God now offered salvation in a way previously unknown — to **whoever calls on the name of the LORD**, whether they are Jew or Gentile.

i. It would be many years until the gospel was offered to Gentiles, yet Peter's sermon text announced the gospel invitation by saying, **whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved**.

ii. The idea is expressed in **Proverbs 18:10**: The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe.

3. (Acts 2:22-24) Peter introduces the focus of the sermon: The resurrected Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth.

“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; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.”

a. **Men of Israel, hear these words**: Many people would think it would be enough for Peter to stop after the quotation from Joel, considering all we have in it. Joel told us of:

- An outpouring of the Holy Spirit.
- Miraculous dreams, visions, and prophecy.
- Signs and wonders regarding the Day of the Lord.
- An invitation to call on the name of the Lord.

i. But it wasn't enough, because Peter had not yet spoken about the saving work of Jesus on our behalf. Everything until this point had been introduction, explaining the strange things they just saw. Now Peter would bring the essential message.

b. **Men of Israel, hear these words**: This was much as Peter had already said, *let this be known to you, and heed my words* (Acts 2:14). Peter wanted people to pay attention, and he spoke as if he had something important to say — something some teachers fail to do.

c. **As you yourselves also know**: Peter referred to what these people already knew about Jesus. They already knew of His life and miraculous works. Often in speaking to people about Jesus, we should start with what they *already* know about Him.

d. **Being delivered by the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God**: Peter knew that Jesus' death was in the plan of God. At the same time, those who rejected Him and called for His execution were responsible for the actions of their **lawless hands**.

i. Peter did not flinch at saying, “You crucified this Man who God sent.” His first concern was not to please his audience, but to tell them the truth. The Spirit-filled Peter was a different man than the Peter who, a few months before this, denied even knowing Jesus (Matthew 26:69-75).

e. **It was not possible**: Peter knew that Jesus could not remain bound by death, as explained by the following quotation from Psalm 16. It was not possible that Jesus should remain a victim of the sin and hatred of man; He would certainly triumph over it.

- i. **Having loosed the pains of death**: In the phrase **pains of death**, the word **pains** is actually the word for “birth pains.” In this sense, the **tomb** was a **womb** for Jesus.
- ii. “It was not possible that the chosen one of God should remain in the grip of death; ‘the abyss can no more hold the Redeemer than a pregnant woman can hold the child in her body.’” (Bruce, quoting Bertram)

4. (**Acts 2:25-33**) Quoting **Psalm 16**, Peter explains the resurrected Jesus.

“For David says concerning Him:

**‘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.
You have made known to me the ways of life;
You will make me full of joy in Your presence.’**

“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. 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.**

- a. **For David says concerning Him**: Peter recognized that though this Psalm spoke of David, it spoke of someone greater than David — the Messiah, Jesus the Christ. Jesus may have taught Peter this when He instructed the disciples in the Scriptures (**Luke 24:44-45**).
- b. **Your Holy One**: Jesus bore the full wrath of God on the cross, **as if** He were a guilty sinner, guilty of **all** our sin, even being made sin for us (**2 Corinthians 5:21**). Yet, that work was an act of holy, giving love for us, so that Jesus Himself did not become a sinner, even though He bore the full **guilt** of our sin.

- i. This is the gospel message; that Jesus took our punishment for sin on the cross and remained a perfect Savior through the whole ordeal — **proved** by His resurrection. Apart from the resurrection, we would have no **proof** that Jesus successfully, perfectly, paid for our sins.

c. **Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption**: Because Jesus bore our sin without becoming a sinner, He remained the **Holy One**, even in His death. Since it is incomprehensible that God's Holy One should be bound by death, the resurrection was absolutely inevitable.

i. Instead of being punished for His glorious work on the cross, Jesus was rewarded, as prophetically described in the Psalm: **You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence**.

d. **David... is both dead and buried**: Peter points out that this Psalm cannot be speaking of its human author, **David** — he is dead and remains buried. The Psalm must speak prophetically of the Messiah, Jesus.

e. **This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses**: Jesus of Nazareth, the man they all knew (*as you yourselves also know*, [Acts 2:22](#)), was the one who fulfilled this prophetic Psalm. How did Peter know this? He saw the resurrected Jesus! The basic **evidence** of the resurrection was simply the report of reliable eyewitnesses: **Of which we are all witnesses**.

f. **He poured out this which you now see and hear**: Peter affirms that what the crowd saw was the work of the risen and ascended Jesus, who has sent His Holy Spirit upon His church.

5. ([Acts 2:34-36](#)) Quoting [Psalm 110](#), Peter explains the Divine Messiah.

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.”’**

“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

a. **The LORD said to my Lord**: This begins the third Old Testament passage Peter used in his sermon, [Psalm 110:1](#). This verse of the Old Testament is quoted in the New Testament more than any other single verse; either quoted or referred to at least 25 times. In this Psalm, David understood and proclaimed the **deity** of the Messiah.

i. In this Psalm, King David — by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit — recorded that Yahweh, Israel's covenant God (**The LORD**), spoke to David's Lord (**my Lord**) as God. Peter used this to show that the Messiah, who is the focus of [Psalm 110](#), is in fact Divine — He is God.

b. **Therefore let all the house of Israel know**: The sermon concludes with a summary. Simply, all Israel should know that even though they crucified Jesus, God has declared Him **both Lord and Christ**.

- i. It is as if Peter said, “You were all wrong about Jesus. You crucified Him as if He were a criminal, but by the resurrection, God proved that He is Lord and Messiah.”
- ii. When Peter exhorted them *whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved* (Acts 2:21), there is little doubt who the **Lord** is that he spoke of: **Jesus**.
- iii. “That the early Christians meant to give Jesus the title **Lord** in this highest sense of all is indicated by their not hesitating on occasion to apply to him passages of Old Testament scripture referring to Yahweh.” (Bruce)

C. The response to Peter’s preaching.

1. (Acts 2:37) They respond with a question: **What shall we do?**

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?”

a. **Now when they heard this...“What shall we do?”** This was obviously a significant work of the Holy Spirit. The great crowd listening to Peter was deeply moved by Peter’s bold proclamation of the truth. *They* asked Peter how they should respond.

i. It is wrong to think that Peter offered no kind of invitation or challenge for his listeners to respond. Acts 2:40 says, *And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation.”* Peter clearly did exhort them to respond, and invited his listeners to *“Be saved.”* Nevertheless, the multitude responded with remarkable initiative.

ii. The response of the crowd also helps us to put the events of that Day of Pentecost into perspective. The exercise of the gift of tongues produced nothing in the listeners except for astonishment and mocking. It wasn’t until the gospel was preached that conviction from the Holy Spirit came. This was the work God really wanted to accomplish.

b. **Cut to the heart:** This is a good way of describing the conviction of the Holy Spirit. They now knew that they were responsible for the death of Jesus (as each of us are), and that they had to *do* something in response to this responsibility.

i. Peter had some previous experience with cutting. When Jesus was arrested, Peter cut off the right ear of one of the men who came to arrest Jesus (John 18:10). All this was an embarrassing mess that Jesus had to clean up. That showed Peter in the flesh, doing the best *he* could with a literal sword of human power.

ii. When the resurrected Jesus changed Peter’s life and when the power of the Holy Spirit had come upon him, he did some much more effective cutting; cutting hearts, opening them to Jesus. This is what Peter could do in the power of the Spirit, doing God’s *best* with the sword of the Spirit, God’s Word. Which sword was more powerful?

c. **Men and brethren, what shall we do?** When God is working on someone’s heart, they *want* to come to Him; they will act to come to God.

i. It has been said that in normal seasons of Christian work the evangelist seeks the sinner. Yet in times of revival or awakening, things change: the sinner seeks the evangelist. This Day of Pentecost in [Acts 2](#) was one of those great seasons of God's work.

2. ([Acts 2:38-40](#)) Peter invites the multitude to come to Jesus.

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 with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation.”

a. **Then Peter said to them:** This was in response to the question, “*What shall we do?*” Peter must have been pleasantly amazed to see what God had done in this situation. Instead of people wanting to crucify him because of Jesus, thousands of people wanted to trust in Jesus as Lord and Messiah.

b. **Repent, and let every one of you be baptized:** Responding to the question, “*What shall we do?*” Peter gave them something to *do*. This means that we must *do* something to be saved, we must *do* something to follow Jesus; it doesn't just “happen.”

i. Peter *did not* say, “There's nothing you can do. If God saves you, you're saved. If God doesn't save you, you'll never be saved.” Though it was true that only God could do the saving, the people had to receive through repentance and faith, faith leading to action such as baptism.

c. **Repent:** The first thing Peter told them to *do* is **repent**. To repent does not mean to feel sorry, but it means to change one's mind or direction. They had thought a certain way about Jesus before, considering Him worthy of crucifixion. Now they must turn their thinking around, embracing Jesus as Lord and Messiah.

i. **Repent** sounds like such a harsh word in the mouths of many preachers and in the ears of many listeners, but it is an essential aspect of the gospel. **Repent** has been rightly called “the first word of the gospel.”

ii. When John the Baptist preached he said, “*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!*” ([Matthew 3:2](#)). When Jesus began to preach He said, “*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*” ([Matthew 4:17](#)). Now when Peter began to preach, he started with **repent**.

iii. Repentance must never be thought of as something we must do *before* we can come back to God. Repentance describes what coming to God is. You can't turn *towards* God without turning *from* the things He is against.

iv. In this sense, **repent** is a word of great hope. It says, “You don't have to continue the way you've been going, you can turn to God.”

v. “The old-fashioned grace of repentance is not to be dispensed with; there must be sorrow for sin; there must be ‘a broken and a contrite heart.’ This, God will not despise; but a ‘conversion’ which does not produce this result, God will not accept as genuine.” (Spurgeon)

d. **Be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ**: This was the second thing Peter said they must do. For them to **be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ** was an expression of their belief and complete trust in Him.

i. Baptism made a clear statement. In that day, Jews were not commonly baptized, only Gentiles who wanted to become Jews. For these Jewish men and women to be baptized showed just how strongly they felt they needed Jesus.

ii. “While baptism with water was the expected symbol for conversion, it was not an indispensable criterion for salvation.” (Longenecker)

e. **The promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off**: As they repented and demonstrated faith and obedience by baptism, the gift of the Holy Spirit would be given to them as it was given to the original group of disciples. Peter also specifically promised that the **promise** of the Holy Spirit would be given to those who believe in all succeeding generations (**all who are afar off**).

i. They saw the glorious work of the Holy Spirit among the disciples, and Peter told them that it was something that these people could take part in; they didn’t only have to be observers. And since the promise is for **all who are afar off**, it includes all people up to the present time.

ii. It is also important to note that Peter did not say that the unbelieving, unaware **children** of his listeners should be baptized. He simply said that the promise of **the remission of sins** and the **gift of the Holy Spirit** were for **all** who would repent and believe with active faith, even to coming generations and **all who are afar off, as many as the Lord God will call**.

iii. “That is to say, that great covenant promise, ‘Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved,’ is meant for you, is meant for your children, is meant for Hottentots, is meant for Hindoos, is meant for Greenlanders, is meant for everybody to whom the Lord’s call is addressed.” (Spurgeon)

f. **And with many other words he testified and exhorted them**: Peter’s sermon didn’t end there. He continued to urge the crowd to come to Jesus in repentant surrender.

g. **Be saved from this perverse generation**: Any generation that is responsible for putting Jesus to death is a **perverse generation**. But since **every** generation is responsible for Jesus’ death, every generation needs salvation.

3. (Acts 2:41) The response to Peter's sermon.

Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.

a. **About three thousand souls were added to them:** This day of Pentecost saw an amazing harvest of souls. The church went from about 120 people to 3,120 people in one day.

i. Think of how this touched lives beyond that one day. Many of the 3,000 were undoubtedly pilgrims who came to Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost. They expected something special from God, but not anything like this. Many in this crowd went back home, traveling far from Jerusalem, taking the good news of Jesus Christ with them.

b. **Those who gladly received his word were baptized:** Those who believed on Jesus that day did so **gladly**, even making a dramatic statement in baptism. They would not have submitted to baptism unless they were fully convinced of who Jesus was and their great need for Him as a Savior.

i. How could you baptize 3,000 people? There were huge resources of water available on the temple mount, and pools and reservoirs nearby, so it was not difficult to find a place where the baptisms could take place.

ii. God continues to do such great things. After the 1990 Summer Harvest Crusade, there was a mass baptism at Corona del Mar. They couldn't count how many were baptized, but more than 5,000 people attended the event. It was reported as the largest baptism service in American history.

D. The life of these first believers.

1. (Acts 2:42) The foundation of their Christian life.

And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

a. **And they continued steadfastly:** On the day of Pentecost the sound of the rushing wind, the tongues of fire, and the conversion of 3,000 were all remarkable events. But the things described in Acts 2:42 were the abiding legacy of God's work.

b. **They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine:** They relied on the apostles to communicate to them who Jesus was and what He had done. They just trusted in Jesus; now they wanted to know more.

i. **Continued steadfastly** uses a Greek verb communicating "a steadfast and single-minded fidelity to a certain course of action." (Longenecker) There was to be no departure from the **apostles' doctrine**, because it was the truth of God.

ii. Thankfully, God allows us to sit under the **apostles' doctrine** — the New Testament record. Every pastor should seek to be unoriginal in the sense that we don't have our own doctrine, but the **apostles' doctrine**.

c. **They continued steadfastly in... fellowship**: The ancient Greek word *koinonia* (translated here as **fellowship**) has the idea of association, communion, fellowship, and participation; it means to **share** in something.

i. The Christian life is meant to be full of **fellowship**, of sharing one with another.

- We share the same Lord Jesus.
- We share the same guide for life.
- We share the same love for God
- We share the same desire to worship Him.
- We share the same struggles.
- We share the same victories
- We share the same job of living for Him.
- We share the same joy of communicating the gospel.

d. **They continued steadfastly... in the breaking of bread**: Even living so close to the time when Jesus was crucified, they still never wanted to forget what He did on the cross. How much more important is it for us to never forget?

e. **They continued steadfastly... in prayers**. Whenever God's work is done, God's people gather for prayer and worship.

i. "In the Greek the definite article occurs before the word 'prayer.' The text actually says, 'to the prayers.' They devoted themselves 'to **the** breaking of bread and to **the** prayers.' Obviously, that is a reference to something formal — to worship in which the people got together and praised God." (Boice)

f. **The apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers**:

Everything else we read about the power and glory of the early church flows from this foundation of the word, fellowship, remembrance of Jesus' work on the cross, and prayer.

i. From Luke's description of the early Christian community, "The educated reader would have got the impression here that the Greek ideal of society had been realized." (Dictionary of New Testament Theology)

ii. "It is presented as a model church, but this does not mean that it was perfect. A few chapters further on, we are going to find that it was far from perfect." (Boice)

2. (Acts 2:43) The presence of the power of God.

Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

- a. **Then fear came upon every soul**: This was evidence of the power of God. One of the greatest, most powerful works God can do is to change the human heart towards a reverent honor of the Lord.
- b. **Many signs and wonders were done**: This was evidence of the power of God. Where God is at work, lives will be touched in miraculous ways.

3. (Acts 2:44-45) Their close hearts and sharing in the common life of Jesus.

Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.

- a. **Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common**: With the influx of more than 3,000 believers, most of whom stayed in Jerusalem and didn't have jobs, the family of Christians had to share if they were to survive.

- i. We shouldn't regard this as an early experiment in communism because it was voluntary, temporary, and flawed to the extent that the church in Jerusalem was in continual need of financial support from other churches. Also, we don't have any evidence this continued very long.

- b. **All who believed were together**: The Jews had a tremendous custom of hospitality during any major feast like Pentecost. Visitors were received into private homes, and no one could charge for giving a bed or a room to a visitor or for supplying their basic needs. The Christians took this tremendous feast-time hospitality and made it an everyday thing.
- c. **Sold their possessions and their goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need**: The power of God is evident here because Jesus became much more important to them than their possessions.

4. (Acts 2:46-47) The Christian family lived together and grew.

So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

- a. **So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house**: The church is meant to worship God and learn His Word together. Yet it is meant to do more; God wants us to share our **lives** with one another.
- b. **Praising God and having favor with all the people**: Their Christian experience was daily, joyful and simple — good examples for us to follow.
- c. **And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved**: This is God's prescription for church growth. If we take care to follow the example of **Acts 2:42-47a**, God will take care of growing the church Himself.

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The Bible Says Acts 2:37-41 Meaning

Peter has just given a sermon to the Jewish pilgrims in Jerusalem explaining many things to them. First, that the disciples were empowered to speak in various languages to these men from all nations due to the power of the Holy Spirit from God. Second, that Jesus the Nazarene was the Christ sent by God, who the Jewish people crucified. But His death was planned by God, and now Jesus was

resurrected back to life and exalted by God to sit at His right hand. Furthermore, Jesus had sent the Spirit to empower His followers. These things were prophesied by the prophet Joel and King David, that God's Spirit would work wonders through people, and that God's sent one (Messiah) would not stay dead.

Peter ends his sermon by reminding the Jewish crowd that they had called for Jesus' death. They had nailed the Lord and Messiah sent by God to a cross and crucified Him ([Acts 2:23,36](#)).

The crowd's response is one of conviction. *Now when they heard Peter's message, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?"* They did not argue with Peter, or defend themselves, or deny that they had been party to Jesus' death. They were *pierced to the heart*, they felt the pain of guilt because what Peter accused them of was true. They had put Jesus to death. And this Jesus had really been sent by God after all, and now His power and message was continuing on through the disciples and the Holy Spirit. So they ask *Peter and the rest of the apostles* the best question one can ask when convicted of sin, *Brethren, what shall we do?* They wanted to know how to make it right. Earlier in [Acts 2:5](#), it is noted that this crowd did have "reverent" men in it, despite the fact that they had crucified Jesus. They were deceived, mistaken, blinded by mob mentality and anger, when they called for Jesus's death ([Matt. 27:22-26](#)). But they had sinned nonetheless and wanted to right themselves in God's eyes. They did not want to linger in their grievous wrongdoing. They are asking Peter, "How do we fix this?"

Peter shares the good news of Jesus with them. The whole reason that Jesus had willingly and knowingly come to earth to die. The way to fix it was to fix their entire personhood, from the inside, only by what God could do for them. Peter calls the crowd to *Repent*, which means to confess that we are not right with God and to turn away from our former way of living, and turn back to God. Following repentance, Peter says that *each of you* in the crowd should *be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.* To *be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ* meant to immerse one's self into water as a symbol of belonging to Christ. It was a way to show the rest of the world that the person being baptized was a follower of Christ.

Peter says that those who repent and are baptized *will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

The *Spirit* created this circumstance to begin with, attracting the crowd of Jewish pilgrims by speaking in their own languages through the remaining followers of Jesus. Now Peter, who has explained that the *Spirit* is responsible for the miracle that the crowd has witnessed, is telling the crowd that they too will *receive* the *Spirit*. This is because *the promise* of the Spirit *is for you* (the crowd) *and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.*

As the gospel spreads throughout Acts, there are two distinct ways in which the apostles preach. For the Gentiles, the apostles call for their listeners to have faith in Jesus to receive the Spirit. And throughout Acts, Gentiles receive the Holy Spirit immediately upon belief. But in these early chapters, the apostles call for their Jewish listeners to repent to receive the Spirit. This might be because the Jews are the chosen people. They're already elect, they already believe. But they rejected the Son of God when He came. Now they're called to repent and turn back to God.

Throughout Acts, Jews receive the Holy Spirit through repentance and the baptism in keeping with repentance, while Gentiles receive the Holy Spirit immediately upon belief.

In the next chapter, Peter will preach again, calling the nation of Israel to repentance, in hopes that it may bring the Kingdom of Heaven to earth:

"Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time." ([Acts 3:19-21](#)).

Peter is effectively saying, "If you will repent and if Israel will repent, Jesus will return to earth and take the throne of Israel. He's just waiting for you to receive Him." This makes clear that had the nation repented of their rejection of Christ and returned to following God, "times of refreshing" would have come by "the presence of the Lord," that God "may send Jesus," meaning Jesus would return and be present among them, for He was "the Christ appointed" for Israel, waiting in heaven "until the period of restoration of all things."

Here at Pentecost, Peter calls for this repentance as well.

Ultimately only some Jews repented and followed Jesus (3000 in this chapter, 5000 in the next), but not the entire nation, and not its leaders. The time of refreshing and the presence of the Lord was not received. It seems likely that the destruction of the temple in 70 AD was a definitive closing of that window of time when repentance was offered. Jesus returning to earth has not yet happened.

However, the lack of repentance from the Jewish people provided immense opportunity for Gentiles. We are currently in what the Bible refers to as the time of the Gentiles, where we are grafted onto the tree of God's chosen people, Israel, through faith in Jesus the Messiah. God's grace (favor) for Israel has extended to the entire world, for those who believe. Gentiles get to share in Israel's relationship with God, even if the nation itself has rejected Christ. The Apostle Paul addresses this in [Romans 11](#), "a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and so all Israel will be saved" ([Romans 11:25-26](#)). For now Israel has experienced this partial hardening, this

stubbornness that keeps them from repentance, but ultimately it is God's will that they shall be saved, for they are His people and His promises are irrevocable.

Peter echoes Jesus's last command to the disciples. Jesus told them to "be [His] witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and Samaria, and as far as the remotest part of the earth" ([Acts 1:8](#)). Now Peter is declaring to the crowd that the [Spirit](#) is for the Jews present and [far off](#), for the entirety of the Jewish people spread across the world. The Spirit will come to [as many](#) people [as the Lord our God will call to Himself](#); in saying this, Peter acknowledges that it is God who is calling people to reconcile to Him, God is pursuing those who are not in a right relationship with Him.

Peter continues to preach this message of repentance. He spoke earnestly and seriously about having seen Jesus risen from the dead, [with many other words he solemnly testified](#). He continued to encourage the crowds to turn away from the corrupt way they were living and make themselves right with God: he [kept on exhorting them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation!"](#) This was a warning, for if there is a need to be [saved](#), it is from something. Peter was calling them to be [saved from this perverse generation](#). The [perverse generation](#) of Jewish leaders who led the people of Israel against the Son of God, rather than embrace Him as God's messiah. They are [perverse](#) in the sense that they are incorrect, crooked, corrupt. They are not in submission to God, they do not see clearly; they did not even recognize His Son when He was physically among them speaking the Word of God to them. Under their leadership, the entire generation of Jews have become [perverse—](#)misled and astray. Peter is calling his audience to repent, to reject the way their current [generation](#) is going, and to be [saved from](#) the negative consequences that will result in their lack of repentance. Doing so would bring the "time of refreshing" when Jesus returns to earth ([Acts 3:19-21](#)).

The crowd responds. So [then, those who had received his word](#), those who believed Peter's testimony, believed the truth of Jesus Christ, and that He resurrected and was exalted by God, and that they needed to repent of their rebellion against God—these new disciples [were baptized](#).

The number of new disciples of Jesus [that day](#), those [added to](#) the group of disciples, was [about three thousand souls](#). This is an incredible increase. From 120 followers of Jesus hiding in a room in Jerusalem, to nearly 3000 new believers who witnessed the disciples speaking in their own native tongues through the power of the Holy Spirit, who heard Peter's sermon about Jesus, and his call to repentance of sin, and responded in obedience.

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You can access the original article here: [Acts 2:37-41 Meaning](#)

[ACTS 2: THE FIRST GOSPEL MESSAGE PREACHED](#)

[v. 1](#) The Feast of Pentecost celebrated the harvest. The people offered the first fruits to God.

v. 4 The Holy Spirit gives us the power to live the life that God wants us to live. Other religions tell men to live a good life but give them no power to do so. The Spirit gives us the ability to speak in tongues, but we have the control of when and how loudly to speak.

v. 11 The Christians were praising God in various languages. When we speak in unknown tongues we're speaking to God.

v. 14 When Peter stood up to speak he spoke to the people in a known language. Those who were speaking in other tongues probably stopped so the message could be heard.

v. 16-21 Peter quoted [Joel 2:28-32](#) as the scriptural basis for what was taking place. God's Word must be the basis for our faith and practice. Experience alone is not a solid basis for our faith. The events described in Joel are to take place in the last times just prior to the return of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we believe that the gifts of the Spirit are for the Church until Christ returns.

v. 23 God sent Jesus to die for us.

v. 24 The resurrection of Christ is the heart of the Gospel message.

v. 27 When Jesus died, His soul went into hell (hades) for three days and three nights. He preached to the captives there ([Matthew 12:40](#); [Isaiah 61:1](#); [1 Peter 3:18-19](#)).

v. 28 [1 Corinthians 13:12](#).

v. 37 This was the first message preached under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. The effect was that men's hearts were convicted ("pricked").

v. 38 Infant baptism cannot save, since baptism follows repentance.

v. 42 The four activities of the early Church were:

- (1) Bible study,
- (2) fellowship,
- (3) ordinance of Lord's supper,
- (4) prayer.

v. 47 The Holy Spirit adds to the Church those He chooses. It is not the work of the Church to increase its membership.

Matthew Henry Commentary on Acts 2

Chapter 2

Between the promise of the Messiah (even the latest of those promises) and his coming many ages intervened; but between the promise of the Spirit and his coming there were but a few days; and during those days the apostles, though they had received orders to preach the gospel to every

creature, and to begin at Jerusalem, yet lay perfectly wind-bound, incognito-concealed, and not offering to preach. But in this chapter the north wind and the south wind awake, and then they awake, and we have them in the pulpit presently. Here is,

- I. The descent of the Spirit upon the apostles, and those that were with them, on the day of pentecost (v. 1-4).
- II. The various speculations which this occasioned among the people that were now met in Jerusalem from all parts (v. 5-13)
- III. The sermon which Peter preached to them hereupon, wherein he shows that this pouring out of the Spirit was the accomplishment of an Old-Testament promise (v. 14-21), that it was a confirmation of Christ's being the Messiah, which was already proved by his resurrection (v. 22-32), and that it was a fruit and evidence of his ascension into heaven (v. 33-36).
- IV. The good effect of this sermon in the conversion of many to the faith of Christ, and their addition to the church (v. 37-41).
- V. The eminent piety and charity of those primitive Christians, and the manifest tokens of God's presence with them, and power in them (v. 42-47).

Acts 2:41; Acts 2:42; Acts 2:43; Acts 2:44; Acts 2:45; Acts 2:46; Acts 2:47

Acts 2:41

Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

[They that gladly received] The word rendered "gladly" means "freely, cheerfully, joyfully." It implies that they did it without compulsion, and with joy. Religion is not compulsion. They who become Christians do it cheerfully; they do it rejoicing in the privilege of becoming reconciled to God through Jesus Christ. Though so many received his word and were baptized, yet it is implied that there were others who did not. It is probable that there were multitudes assembled who were alarmed, but who did not receive the word with joy. In all revivals there are many who become alarmed, and who are anxious about their souls, but who refuse to embrace the gospel, and again become thoughtless, and are ruined.

[His word] The message which Peter had spoken respecting the pardon of sin through Jesus Christ.

[Were baptized] That is, those who professed a readiness to embrace the offers of salvation. The narrative plainly implies that this was done the same day. Their conversion was instantaneous. The demand on them was to yield themselves at once

to God. And their profession was made, and the ordinance which sealed their profession administered without delay.

[And the same day] The discourse of Peter commenced at nine o'clock in the morning, Acts 2:15. How long it continued it is not said; but the ceremony of admitting them to the church and of baptizing them was evidently performed on the same day. The mode in which this is done is not mentioned; but it is highly improbable that in the midst of the city of Jerusalem three thousand persons were wholly immersed in one day. The whole narrative supposes that it was all done in the city; and yet there is no probability that there were conveniences there for immersing so many persons in a single day.

Besides, in the ordinary way of administering baptism by immersion, it is difficult to conceive that so many persons could have been immersed in so short a time. There is, indeed, here no positive proof that they were not immersed; but the narrative is one of those incidental circumstances often much more satisfactory than philological discussion, that show the extreme improbability that all this was done by wholly immersing them in water. It may be further remarked that here is an example of very quick admission to the church. It was the first great work of grace under the gospel. It was the model of all revivals of religion. And it was doubtless intended that this should be a specimen of the manner in which the ministers of religion should act in regard to admissions to the Christian church. Prudence is indeed required; but this example furnishes no warrant for advising those who profess their willingness to obey Jesus Christ, to delay uniting with the church. If persons give evidence of piety, of true hatred of sin, and of attachment to the Lord Jesus; they should unite themselves to his people without delay.

[There were added] To the company of disciples, or to the followers of Christ.

[Souls] Persons. Compare 1 Peter 3:20; Gen 12:5. It is not affirmed that all this took place in one part of Jerusalem, or that it was all done at once; but it is probable that this was what was afterward ascertained to be the fruit of this day's labor, the result of this revival of religion. This was the first effusion of the Holy Spirit under the preaching of the gospel; and it shows that such scenes are to be expected in the church, and that the gospel is suited to work a rapid and mighty change in the hearts of people.

Acts 2:42

And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

[And they continued stedfastly] They persevered in, or they adhered to. This is the inspired record of the result. That any of these apostatized is nowhere recorded, and is not to be presumed. Though they had been suddenly converted; though they were suddenly admitted to the church; though they were exposed to much persecution and contempt, and to many trials, yet the record is that they adhered to the doctrines and duties of the Christian religion. The word rendered "continued stedfastly" -

proskarterountes - means "attending one, remaining by his side, not leaving or forsaking him."

[The apostles' doctrine] This does not mean that they held or believed the doctrines of the apostles, though that was true; but it means that they adhered to, or attended on, their teaching or instruction. The word doctrine has now a technical sense, and means a collection and arrangement of abstract views supposed to be contained in the Bible. In the Scriptures the word means simply "teaching"; and the expression here denotes that they continued to attend on their instructions. One evidence of conversion is a desire to be instructed in the doctrines and duties of religion, and a willingness to attend on the preaching of the gospel.

[And fellowship] The word rendered "fellowship," koinoonia, is often rendered "communion." It properly denotes "having things in common, or participation, society, friendship." It may apply to anything which may be possessed in common, or in which all may partake. Thus, all Christians have the same hope of heaven; the same joys; the same hatred of sin; the same enemies to contend with. Thus, they have the same subjects of conversation, of feeling, and of prayer; or they have communion in these things. And thus the early Christians had their property in common. The word here may apply to either or to all of these things to their conversation, their prayers, their dangers, or their property; and means that they were united to the apostles, and participated with them in whatever befell them. It may be added that the effect of a revival of religion is to unite Christians more and more, and to bring those who were before separated to union and love. Christians feel that they are a band of brethren, and that, however much they were separated before they became Christians, now they have great and important interests in common; they are united in feelings, in interests, in dangers, in conflicts, in opinions, and in the hopes of a blessed immortality.

[Breaking of bread] The Syriac renders this "the eucharist" or the Lord's Supper. It cannot, however, be determined whether this refers to their partaking of their ordinary food together, or to feasts of charity, or to the Lord's Supper. The bread of the Hebrews was made commonly into cakes, thin, hard, and brittle, so that it was broken instead of being cut. Hence, to denote "intimacy or friendship," the phrase "to break bread together" would be very expressive in the same way as the Greeks denoted it by drinking TOGETHER, sumposion. From the expression used in Acts 2:44, compare with Acts 2:46, that they had all things common, it would rather seem to be implied that this referred to the participation of their ordinary meals. The action of breaking bread was commonly performed by the master or head of a family immediately after asking a blessing (Lightfoot).

[In prayers] This was one effect of the influence of the Spirit, and an evidence of their change. A genuine revival will be always followed by a love of prayer.

And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

[And fear came] That is, there was great reverence or awe. The multitude had just before derided them (Acts 2:13); but so striking and manifest was the power of God on this occasion, that it silenced all clamors, and produced a general veneration and awe. The effect of a great work of God's grace is commonly to produce an unusual seriousness and solemnity in a community, even among those who are not converted. It restrains, subdues, and silences opposition.

[Every soul] Every person or individual; that is, upon the people generally; not only on those who became Christians, but upon the multitudes who witnessed these things. All things were suited to produce this fear: the recent crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth; the wonders that attended that event; the events of the day of Pentecost; and the miracles performed by the apostles, were all suited to diffuse solemnity, thought, anxiety through the community.

[Many wonders and signs] See the notes on Acts 2:22. This was promised by the Saviour, Mark 16:17. Some of the miracles which they performed are specified in the following chapters.

Acts 2:44

And all that believed were together, and had all things common;

[All that believed] That is, that believed that Jesus was the Messiah; for that was the distinguishing point by which they were known from others.

[Were together] Were united; were joined in the same thing. It does not mean that they lived in the same house, but they were united in the same community, or engaged in the same thing. They were doubtless often together in the same place for prayer and praise. One of the best means for strengthening the faith of young converts is for them often to meet together for prayer, conversation, and praise.

[Had all things common] That is, all their property or possessions. See Acts 4:32-37; 5:1-10. The apostles, in the time of the Saviour, evidently had all their property in common stock, and Judas was made their treasurer. They regarded themselves as one family, having common needs, and there was no use or propriety in their possessing extensive property by themselves. Yet even then it is probable that some of them retained an interest in their property which was not supposed to be necessary to be devoted to the common use. It is evident that John thus possessed property which he retained, John 19:27. And it is clear that the Saviour did not command them to give up their property into a common stock, nor did the apostles enjoin it: Acts 5:4, "While it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold was it not in thine own power?" It was, therefore, perfectly voluntary, and was as evidently adapted to the special circumstances of the early converts. Many of them came from abroad. They were from Parthia, and Media, and Arabia, and Rome, and Africa, etc. It is probable,

also, that they now remained longer in Jerusalem than they had at first proposed; and it is not at all improbable that they would be denied now the usual hospitalities of the Jews, and excluded from their customary kindness, because they had embraced Jesus of Nazareth, who had been just put to death. In these circumstances, it was natural and proper that they should share their property while they remained together.

Acts 2:45

And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.

[And sold] That is, they sold as much as was necessary in order to procure the means of providing for the needs of each other.

[Possessions] Property, particularly real estate. This word, *kteemata*, refers properly to their fixed property, as lands, houses, vineyards, etc. The word rendered "goods," *huparxeis*, refers to their personal or movable "property."

[And parted them to all] They distributed them to supply the needs of their poorer brethren, according to their necessities.

[As every man had need] This expression limits and fixes the meaning of what is said before. The passage does not mean that they sold all their possessions, or that they relinquished their title to all their property, but that they so far regarded all as common as to be willing to part with it IF it was needful to supply the needs of the others.

Hence, the property was laid at the disposal of the apostles, and they were desired to distribute it freely to meet the needs of the poor, Acts 4:34-35.

This was an important incident in the early propagation of religion, and it may suggest many useful reflections:

1. We see the effect of religion. The love of property is one of the strongest affections which people have. There is nothing that will overcome it but religion. That will; and one of the first effects of the gospel was to loosen the hold of Christians on property.
2. It is the duty of the church to provide for the needs of its poor and needy members. There can be no doubt that property should now be regarded as so far common as that the needs of the poor should be supplied by those who are rich. Compare Matt 26:11.
3. If it be asked why the early disciples evinced this readiness to part with their property in this manner, it may be replied:
 - (1) That the apostles had done it before them. The family of the Saviour had all things common.
 - (2) It was the nature of religion to do it.
 - (3) The circumstances of the persons assembled on this occasion were such as to require it. They were many of them from distant regions, and probably many of them of the poorer class of the people in Jerusalem. In this they evinced what should be done in behalf of the poor in the church at all times.

4. If it be asked whether this was done commonly among the early Christians, it may be replied that there is no evidence that it was. It is mentioned here, and in Acts 4:32-37, and Acts 5:1-7. It does not appear that it was done even by all who were afterward converted in Judea; and there is no evidence that it was done in Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, Philippi, Rome, etc. That the effect of religion was to make people liberal and willing to provide for the poor there can be no doubt. See 2 Cor 8:19; 9:2; 1 Cor 16:2; Gal 2:10. But there is no proof that it was common to part with their possessions and to lay them at the feet of the apostles. Religion does not contemplate, evidently, that people should break up all the arrangements in society, but it contemplates that those who have property should be ready and willing to part with it for the help of the poor and needy.

5. If it be asked, then, whether all the arrangements of property should be broken up now, and believers have all things in common, we are prepared to answer "No."

Because:

(1) This was an extraordinary case.

(2) It was not even enjoined by the apostles on them.

(3) It was practiced nowhere else.

(4) It would be impracticable. No community where all things were held in common has long prospered. It has been attempted often, by pagans, by infidels, and by fanatical sects of Christians. It ends soon in anarchy, licentiousness, idleness, and profligacy; or the more cunning secure the mass of the property, and control the whole. Until all people are made alike, there could be no hope of such a community; and if there could be, it would not be desirable. God evidently intended that people should be excited to industry by the hope of gain; and then he demands that their gains shall be devoted to his service. Still, this was a noble instance of Christian generosity, and evinced the power of religion in loosing the hold which people commonly have on the world. It rebukes also those professors of religion, of whom, alas, there are many, who give nothing to benefit either the souls or bodies of their fellow-men.

Acts 2:46

And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,

[With one accord] Compare Acts 1:14; 2:1.

[In the temple] This was the public place of worship; and the disciples were not disposed to leave the place where their fathers had so long worshipped God. This does not mean that they were constantly in the temple, but only at the customary hours of prayer—at nine o'clock in the morning, and at three o'clock in the afternoon.

[And breaking bread] See the notes on Acts 2:42.

[From house to house] In the margin, "at home." So the Syriac and Arabic. The common interpretation, however, is, that they did it in their various houses, now in this

and now in that, as might be convenient. If it refers to their ordinary meals, then it means that they partook in common of what they possessed, and the expression "did eat their meat" seems to imply that this refers to their common meals, and not to the Lord's Supper.

[Did eat their meat] Did partake of their food. The word "meat" with us is applied to "flesh." In the Bible, and in Old English authors, it is applied to "provisions" of any kind. Here it means all kinds of sustenance; what nourished them - trofees - and the use of this word proves that it does not refer to the Lord's Supper; for that ordinance is nowhere represented as designed for an ordinary meal, or to nourish the body. Compare 1 Cor 11:33-34.

[With gladness] With rejoicing. This is one of the effects of religion. It is far from gloom; it diffuses happiness over the mind; it bestows additional joy in the participation of even our ordinary pleasures.

[Singleness of heart] This means with a sincere and pure heart. They were satisfied and thankful. They were not perplexed or anxious; nor were they solicitous for the luxurious living, or aspiring after the vain objects of the people of the world. Compare Rom 12:8; 2 Cor 1:12; Col 3:22; Eph 6:5.

Acts 2:47

Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

[Praising God] See Luke 24:53.

[And having favour] See Luke 2:52.

[With all the people] That is, with the great mass of the people; with the people generally. It does not mean that all the people had become reconciled to Christianity; but their humble, serious, and devoted lives won the favor of the great mass of the community, and silenced opposition and cavil. This was a remarkable effect, but God has power to silence opposition; and there it nothing so well suited to do this as the humble and consistent lives of his friends.

[And the Lord added] See Acts 5:14; 11:24, etc. It was the Lord who did this. There was no power in man to do it; and the Christian loves to trace all increase of the church to the grace of God.

[Added] Caused, or inclined them to be joined to the church.

[The church] To the assembly of the followers of Christ - tee ekkleesia. The word rendered "church" properly means "those who are called out," and is applied to Christians as being called out, or separated from the world. It is used only three times in the gospels, Matt 16:18; 18:17, twice. It occurs frequently in other parts of the New Testament, and usually as applied to the followers of Christ. Compare Acts 5:11; 7:38; 8:1,3; 9:31; 11:22,26; 12:1,5, etc. It is used in Classic writers to denote "an assembly"

of any kind, and is twice thus used in the New Testament (Acts 19:39,41), where it is translated "assembly."

[Such as should be saved] This whole phrase is a translation of a participle - tous soozomenous. It does not express any purpose that they should be saved, but simply the fact that they were those who would be, or who were about to be saved. It is clear, however, from this expression, that those who became members of the church were those who continued to adorn their profession, or who gave proof that they were sincere Christians. It is implied here, also, that those who are to be saved will join themselves to the church of God. This is everywhere required; and it constitutes one evidence of piety when they are willing to face the world, and give themselves at once to the service of the Lord Jesus. Two remarks may be made on the last verse of this chapter; one is, that the effect of a consistent Christian life will be to command the respect of the world; and the other is, that the effect will be continually to increase the number of those who shall be saved. In this case they were daily added to it; the church was constantly increasing; and the same result may be expected in all cases where there is similar zeal, self-denial, consistency, and prayer.

We have now contemplated the foundation of the Christian church and the first glorious revival of religion. This chapter deserves to be profoundly studied by all ministers of the gospel, as well as by all who pray for the prosperity of the kingdom of God. It should excite our fervent gratitude that God has left this record of the first great work of grace, and our earnest prayers that He would multiply and extend such scenes until the earth shall be filled with His glory.

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Acts 2:41

Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

[They that gladly received his word] The word *asmenoos*, which signifies joyfully, readily, willingly, implies that they approved of the doctrine delivered; that they were glad to hear of this way of salvation; and that they began immediately to act according to its dictates. This last sense is well expressed in a similar phrase by Josephus: when speaking of the young Israelites enticing the Midianitish women to sin, by fair speeches, he says: *hai de asmenoos dexamenai tous logous suneesan autois*, Ant. l. 4 c. 4. Then they who approved of their words consorted with them. The word is however omitted by ABCD, Coptic, Sahidic, AEthiopic, Vulgate, the Itala of the Codex Bezae, Clemens, and Chrysostom.

[Were baptized] That is, in the name of Jesus, Acts 2:38, for this was the criterion of a Jew's conversion; and when a Jew had received baptism in this name he was excluded from all communication with his countrymen; and no man would have forfeited such privileges but on the fullest and clearest conviction. This baptism was a very powerful means to prevent their apostasy; they had, by receiving baptism in the name of Jesus, renounced Judaism, and all the political advantages connected with it; and they found it indispensably necessary to make the best use of that holy religion which they had received in its stead. Dr. Lightfoot has well remarked, that the Gentiles who received the Christian doctrine were baptized in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit; whereas the Jewish converts, for the reasons already given, were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

[Were added unto them three thousand souls.] Prosetetheesan, They went over from one party to another. The Greek writers make use of this verb to signify that act by which cities, towns, or provinces changed their masters, and put themselves under another government. So these 3,000 persons left the scribes and Pharisees, and put themselves under the teaching of the apostles, professing the Christian doctrine, and acknowledging that Christ was come, and that he who was lately crucified by the Jews was the promised and only Messiah; and in this faith they were baptized.

These 3,000 were not converted under one discourse, nor in one place, nor by one person. All the apostles preached, some in one language, and some in another; and not in one house-for where was there one at that time that could hold such a multitude of people? For, out of the multitudes that heard, 3,000 were converted; and if one in five was converted it must have been a vary large proportion. The truth seems to be this: All the apostles preached in different parts of the city, during the course of that day; and on that day tee heemera ekeinee, 3,000 converts were the fruits of the conjoint exertions of these holy men. Dr. Lightfoot thinks that the account in this place is the fulfilment of the prophecy in Ps 110:1, etc.: The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand; this refers to the resurrection and ascension of Christ. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, Acts 2:3. This was the day of his power; and while the apostles proclaimed his death, resurrection, and ascension, the people came willingly in, and embraced the doctrines of Christianity.

Acts 2:42

And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

[They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine] They received it, retained it, and acted on its principles.

[And fellowship] Koinoonia, community; meaning association for religious and spiritual purposes. The community of goods cannot be meant; for this is mentioned Acts 2:44-45, where it is said, they had all things common.

[And in breaking of bread] Whether this means the holy eucharist, or their common meals, it is difficult to say. The Syriac understands it of the former. Breaking of bread was that act which preceded a feast or meal, and which, was performed by the master of the house, when he pronounced the blessing-what we would call grace before meat. See the form at Matt 26:26.

[And in prayers,] In supplications to God for an increase of grace and life in their own souls; for establishment in the truth which they had received; and for the extension of the kingdom of Christ in the salvation of men. Behold the employment of the primitive and apostolic church.

1. They were builded up on the foundation of the prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the corner stone.
2. They continued steadfastly in that doctrine which they had so evidently received from God.
3. They were separated from the world, and lived in a holy Christian fellowship, strengthening and building up each other in their most holy faith.
4. They were frequent in breaking bread; in remembrance that Jesus Christ died for them.
5. They continued in prayers; knowing that they could be no longer faithful than while they were upheld by their God; and knowing also that they could not expect his grace to support them, unless they humbly and earnestly prayed for its continuance.

Acts 2:43

And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

[And fear came upon every soul] Different MSS, and versions read this clause thus, And GREAT fear and TREMBLING came upon every soul in JERUSALEM. For several weeks past they had a series of the most astonishing miracles performed before their eyes; they were puzzled and confounded at the manner in which the apostles preached, who charged them home with the deliberate murder of Jesus Christ, and who attested, in the most positive manner, that he was risen from the dead, and that God had sent down that mighty effusion of the Spirit which they now witnessed as a proof of his resurrection and ascension, and that this very person whom they had crucified was appointed by God to be the Judge of quick and dead. They were in consequence stung with remorse, and were apprehensive of the judgments of God; and the wonders and signs continually done by the apostles were at once proofs of the celestial origin of their doctrine and mission, and of their own baseness, perfidy, and wickedness.

Acts 2:44

And all that believed were together, and had all things common;
[And all that believed] Hoi pisteuontes The believers, i.e. those who conscientiously credited the doctrine concerning the incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ, and had, in consequence, received redemption in his blood. [Were together] Epi to auto. "These words signify either, in one time, Acts 3:1; or in one place, Acts 2:1; or in one thing. The last of these three senses seems to be the most proper here; for it is not probable that the believers, who were then 3,000 in number, Acts 2:41, besides the 120 spoken of Acts 1:15, were used all to meet at one time, or in one place, in Jerusalem." See Dr. Pearce.

[And had all things common] Perhaps this has not been well understood. At all the public religious feasts in Jerusalem, there was a sort of community of goods. No man at such times hired houses or beds in Jerusalem; all were lent gratis by the owners: Yoma, fol. 12. Megill. fol. 26. The same may be well supposed of their ovens, cauldrons, tables, spits, and other utensils. Also, provisions of water were made for them at the public expense. Shekalim, cap. 9. See Lightfoot here. Therefore a sort of community of goods was no strange thing at Jerusalem, at such times as these. It appears, however, that this community of goods was carried further; for we are informed, Acts 2:45, that they sold their possessions and their goods, and parted them to all, as every man had need. But this probably means that, as in consequence of this remarkable outpouring of the Spirit of God; and their conversion, they were detained longer at Jerusalem than they had originally intended, they formed a kind of community for the time being, that none might suffer want on the present occasion; as no doubt the unbelieving Jews, who were mockers, Acts 2:13, would treat these new converts with the most marked disapprobation.

That an absolute community of goods never obtained in the church at Jerusalem unless for a very short time, is evident from the apostolical precept, 1 Cor 16:1, etc., by which collections were ordered to be made for the poor; but, if there had been a community of goods in the church there could have been no ground for such recommenations as these, as there could have been no such distinction as rich and poor, if everyone, on entering the church, gave up all his goods to a common stock. Besides, while this sort of community lasted at Jerusalem, it does not appear to have been imperious upon any; persons might or might not thus dispose of their goods, as we learn from the case of Ananias, Acts 5:4. Nor does it appear that what was done at Jerusalem at this time obtained in any other branch of the Christian church; and in this, and in Acts 5, where it is mentioned, it is neither praised nor blamed. We may therefore safely infer, it was something that was done at this time, on this occasion, through some local necessity, which the circumstances of the infant church at Jerusalem might render expedient for that place and on that occasion only.

Acts 2:45

And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.

(No Clarke commentary on this verse.)

Acts 2:46

And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, [They, continuing daily with one accord in the temple] They were present at all the times of public worship, and joined together in prayers and praises to God; for it is not to be supposed that they continued to offer any of the sacrifices prescribed by the law. [Breaking bread from house to house] This may signify, that select companies, who were contiguous to each other, frequently ate together at their respective lodgings on their return from public worship. But *kat' oikon*, which we translate from house to house, is repeatedly used by the Greek writers for home, at home (see margin), for though they had all things in common, each person lived at his own table. Breaking bread is used to express the act of taking their meals. The bread of the Jews was thin, hard, and dry, and was never cut with the knife as ours is, but was simply broken by the hand.

[With gladness and singleness of heart] A true picture of genuine Christian fellowship. They ate their bread: they had no severe fasts; the Holy Spirit had done in their souls, by his refining influence, what others vainly expect from bodily austerities. It may be said also, that, if they had no severe fasts, they had no splendid feasts: all was moderation, and all was contentment. They were full of gladness, spiritual joy and happiness; and singleness of heart, every man worthy of the confidence of his neighbour; and all walking by the same rule, and minding the same thing.

Acts 2:47

Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

[Praising God] As the fountain whence they had derived all their spiritual and temporal blessings; seeing him in all things, and magnifying the work of his mercy.

[Having favour with all the people.] Every honest, upright Jew would naturally esteem these for the simplicity, purity, and charity of their lives. The scandal of the cross had not yet commenced; for, though they had put Jesus Christ to death, they had not yet entered into a systematic opposition to the doctrines he taught.

[And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved.] Though many approved of the life and manners of these primitive Christians, yet they did not become

members of this holy church; God permitting none to be added to it, but tous soozomenous, those who were saved from their sins and prejudices. The church of Christ was made up of saints; sinners were not permitted to incorporate themselves with it.

One manuscript and the Armenian version, instead of tous soozomenous, the saved, have tous soozomenois, to them who were saved; reading the verse thus: And the Lord added daily to those who were saved. He united those who were daily converted under the preaching of the apostles to those who had already been converted. And thus every lost sheep that was found was brought to the flock, that, under the direction of the great Master Shepherd, they might go out and in, and find pasture. The words, to the church, tee ekklesia, are omitted by BC, Coptic, Sahidic, AEthiopic, Armenian, and Vulgate; and several add the words epi to auto, at that time (which begin the first verse of the next chapter) to the conclusion of this. My Old Manuscript English Bible reads the verse thus: For so the Lord encreased hem that weren maad saaf, eche day, into the same thing.

Nearly the same rendering as that in Wycliff. Our translation of tous soozomenous, such as should be saved is improper and insupportable. The original means simply and solely those who were then saved; those who were redeemed from their sins, and baptized into the faith of Jesus Christ. The same as those whom Paul addressed, Eph 2:8: By grace ye are saved, este sesoosmenoi; or, ye are those who have been saved by grace. So in Titus 3:5: According to his mercy he saved us, esoosen heemas, by the washing of regeneration. And in 1 Cor 1:18, we have the words tois soozomenois, them who are saved, to express those who had received the Christian faith; in opposition to tois apollumenois, to those who are lost, namely the Jews, who obstinately refused to receive salvation on the terms of the Gospel, the only way in which they could be saved; for it was by embracing the Gospel of Christ that they were put in a state of salvation; and, by the grace it imparted, actually saved from the power, guilt: and dominion of sin.

See 1 Cor 15:2: I made known unto you, brethren, the Gospel which I preached unto you, which ye have received, and in which ye stand; and BY WHICH YE ARE SAVED, di' hou kai soozesthe. Our translation, which indeed existed long before our present authorized version, as may be seen in Cardmarden's Bible, 1566, Beck's Bible, 1549, and Tindall's Testament, printed by Will. Tylle, in 1548, is bad in itself; but it has been rendered worse by the comments put on it, namely, that those whom God adds to the church shall necessarily and unavoidably be eternally saved; whereas no such thing is hinted by the original text, be the doctrine of the indefectibility of the saints true or false-which shall be examined in its proper place.

ON that awful subject, the foreknowledge of God, something has already been spoken: see Acts 2:23. Though it is a subject which no finite nature can comprehend, yet it is possible so to understand what relates to us in it as to avoid those rocks of presumption and despondency on which multitudes have been shipwrecked. The

foreknowledge of God is never spoken of in reference to himself, but in reference to us: in him properly there is neither foreknowledge nor afterknowledge. Omniscience, or the power to know all things, is an attribute of God, and exists in him as omnipotence, or the power to do all things. He can do whatsoever he will; and he does whatsoever is fit or proper to be done. God cannot have foreknowledge, strictly speaking, because this would suppose that there was something coming, in what we call futurity, which had not yet arrived at the presence of the Deity. Neither can he have any afterknowledge, strictly speaking, for that would suppose that something that had taken place, in what we call preterity, or past time, had now got beyond the presence of the Deity. As God exists in all that can be called eternity, so he is equally everywhere: nothing can be future to him, because he lives in all futurity; nothing can be past to him, because he equally exists in all past time: futurity and preterity are relative terms to us; but they can have no relation to that God who dwells in every point of eternity; with whom all that is past, and all that is present, and all that is future to man, exists in one infinite, indivisible, and eternal NOW. As God's omnipotence implies his power to do all things, so God's omniscience implies his power to know all things; but we must take heed that we meddle not with the infinite free agency of this Eternal Being. Though God can do all things, he does not all things.

Infinite judgment directs the operations of his power, so that though he can, yet he does not do all things, but only such things as are proper to be done. In what is called illimitable space, he can make millions of millions of systems; but he does not see proper to do this. He can destroy the solar system, but he does not do it: he can fashion and order, in endless variety, all the different beings which now exist, whether material, animal, or intellectual; but he does not do this, because he does not see it proper to be done. Therefore it does not follow that, because God can do all things, therefore he must do all things. God is omniscient, and can know all things; but does it follow from this that he must know all things? Is he not as free in the volitions of his wisdom, as he is in the volitions of his power? The contingent as absolute, or the absolute as contingent? God has ordained some things as absolutely certain; these he knows as absolutely certain.

He has ordained other things as contingent; these he knows as contingent. It would be absurd to say that he foreknows a thing as only contingent which he has made absolutely certain. And it would be as absurd to say that he foreknows a thing to be absolutely certain which in his own eternal counsel he has made contingent. By absolutely certain, I mean a thing which must be, in that order, time, place, and form in which divine wisdom has ordained it to be; and that it can be no otherwise than this infinite counsel has ordained. By contingent, I mean such things as the infinite wisdom of God has thought proper to poise on the possibility of being or not being, leaving it to the will of intelligent beings to turn the scale. Or, contingencies are such possibilities, amid the succession of events, as the infinite wisdom of God has left to the will of intelligent beings to determine whether any such event shall take place or not.

To deny this would involve the most palpable contradictions, and the most monstrous absurdities. If there be no such things as contingencies in the world, then everything is fixed and determined by an unalterable decree and purpose of God; and not only all free agency is destroyed, but all agency of everything, except that of the Creator himself; for on this ground God is the only operator, either in time or eternity: all created beings are only instruments, and do nothing but as impelled and acted upon by this almighty and sole Agent. Consequently, every act is his own; for if he have purposed them all as absolutely certain, having nothing contingent in them, then he has ordained them to be so; and if no contingency, then no free agency, and God alone is the sole actor. Hence, the blasphemous, though, from the premises, fair conclusion, that God is the author of all the evil and sin that are in the world; and hence, follows that absurdity, that, as God can do nothing that is wrong, WHATEVER IS, is RIGHT. Sin is no more sin; a vicious human action is no crime, if God have decreed it, and by his foreknowledge and will impelled the creature to act it.

On this ground there can be no punishment for delinquencies; for if everything be done as God has predetermined, and his determinations must necessarily be all right, then neither the instrument nor the agent has done wrong. Thus all vice and virtue, praise and blame, merit and demerit, guilt and innocence, are at once confounded, and all distinctions of this kind confounded with them. Now, allowing the doctrine of the contingency of human actions (and it must be allowed in order to shun the above absurdities and blasphemies), then we see every intelligent creature accountable for its own works, and for the use it makes of the power with which God has endued it; and, to grant all this consistently, we must also grant that God foresees nothing is absolutely and inevitably certain which he has made contingent; and, because he has designed it to be contingent, therefore he cannot know it as absolutely and inevitably certain. I conclude that God, although omniscient, is not obliged, in consequence of this, to know all that he can know; no more than he is obliged, because he is omnipotent, to do all that he can do.

How many, by confounding the self and free agency of God with a sort of continual impulsive necessity, have raised that necessity into an all-commanding and overruling energy, to which God himself is made subject! Very properly did Milton set his damned spirits about such work as this, and has made it a part of their endless punishment:

Others apart sat on a hill retired,
In thoughts more elevate; and reasoned high
Of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate;
Fixed fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute,
And found no end, in wand'ring mazes lost.

Paradise Lost, b. 2 l. 557.

Among some exceptionable expressions, the following are also good thoughts on the free agency and fall of man:

—— I made him just and right,
Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall.
Not free, what proof could they have given sincere
Of true allegiance, constant faith or love,
When only what they needs must do appeared,
Not what they would? What praise could they receive?
Useless and vain, of freedom both despoiled,
Made passive, both had served NECESSITY,
Not ME. ——

So without least impulse or shadow of fate,
Or aught by me immutably foreseen,
They trespass, authors to themselves in all
Both what they judge, and what they choose, for so
I formed them free, and free they must remain
Till they enthrall themselves: I else must change
Their nature, and revoke the high decree
Unchangeable, eternal, which ordained
Their freedom; they themselves ordained their fall.

Ibid, b. 3 l. 98, 103, 120.

I shall conclude these observations with a short extract from Mr. Bird's Conferences, where, in answer to the objection, "If many things fall out contingently, or as it were by accident, God's foreknowledge of them can be but contingent, dependent on man's free will," he observes: "It is one thing to know that a thing will be done necessarily; and another, to know necessarily that a thing will be done. God doth necessarily foreknow all that will be done; but he doth not know that those things which shall be done voluntarily will be done necessarily: he knoweth that they will be done; but he knoweth withal that they might have fallen out otherwise, for aught he had ordered to the contrary. So likewise God knew that Adam would fall; and yet he knew that he would not fall necessarily, for it was possible for him not to have fallen. And as touching God's preordination going before his prescience as the cause of all events, this would be to make God the author of all the sin in the world; his knowledge comprehending that as well as other things. God indeed foreknoweth all things, because they will be done; but things are not (therefore) done, because he foreknoweth them.

It is impossible that any man, by his voluntary manner of working, should elude God's foresight; but then this foresight doth not necessitate the will, for this were to take it wholly away. For as the knowledge of things present imports no necessity on that which is done, so the foreknowledge of things future lays no necessity on that which shall be; because whosoever knows and sees things, he knows and sees them as they are, and not as they are not; so that God's knowledge doth not confound things, but

reaches to all events, not only which come to pass, but as they come to pass, whether contingently or necessarily. As, for example, when you see a man walking upon the earth, and at the very same instant the sun shining in the heavens, do you not see the first as voluntary, and the second as natural! And though at the instant you see both done, there is a necessity that they be done (or else you could not see them at all), yet there was a necessity of one only before they were done (namely, the sun's shining in the heavens), but none at all of the other (namely the man's walking upon the earth.) The sun could not but shine, as being a natural agent; the man might not have walked, as being a voluntary one."

This is a good argument; but I prefer that which states the knowledge of God to be absolutely free, without the contradictions which are mentioned above. "But you deny the omniscience of God."-No, no more than I deny his omnipotence, and you know I do not, though you have asserted the contrary. But take heed how you speak about this infinitely free agent: if you will contradict, take heed that you do not blaspheme. I ask some simple questions on the subject of God's knowledge and power: if you know these things better than your neighbour, be thankful, be humble, and pray to God to give you amiable tempers; for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. May he be merciful to thee and me!

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