

Session 2



The image shows a person from behind, wearing a large green backpack, standing in an airport terminal. They are looking at a large digital departure board. The board is filled with flight information, including flight numbers, destinations, and times. The person is standing in a queue, and there are other people and airport infrastructure visible in the background.

| Flight | Destination | Time | Status |
|--------|---------------------|-------|---------|
| AA100 | New York | 12:00 | On Time |
| AA200 | Los Angeles | 13:00 | Delayed |
| AA300 | Chicago | 14:00 | On Time |
| AA400 | San Francisco | 15:00 | On Time |
| AA500 | London | 16:00 | On Time |
| AA600 | Paris | 17:00 | On Time |
| AA700 | Amsterdam | 18:00 | On Time |
| AA800 | Brussels | 19:00 | On Time |
| AA900 | Frankfurt | 20:00 | On Time |
| AA1000 | Munich | 21:00 | On Time |
| AA1100 | Berlin | 22:00 | On Time |
| AA1200 | Madrid | 23:00 | On Time |
| AA1300 | Rome | 00:00 | On Time |
| AA1400 | Naples | 01:00 | On Time |
| AA1500 | Barcelona | 02:00 | On Time |
| AA1600 | Valencia | 03:00 | On Time |
| AA1700 | Bilbao | 04:00 | On Time |
| AA1800 | Seville | 05:00 | On Time |
| AA1900 | Malaga | 06:00 | On Time |
| AA2000 | Cadiz | 07:00 | On Time |
| AA2100 | Granada | 08:00 | On Time |
| AA2200 | Almeria | 09:00 | On Time |
| AA2300 | Alcala de Henares | 10:00 | On Time |
| AA2400 | Alcala de Guzman | 11:00 | On Time |
| AA2500 | Alcala de Cordova | 12:00 | On Time |
| AA2600 | Alcala de Toledo | 13:00 | On Time |
| AA2700 | Alcala de Zamora | 14:00 | On Time |
| AA2800 | Alcala de Salamanca | 15:00 | On Time |
| AA2900 | Alcala de Leon | 16:00 | On Time |
| AA3000 | Alcala de Castile | 17:00 | On Time |

A Mission with a Message

THE POINT

We can have a relationship with God through Christ alone.

THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

On a train in the bowels of the busiest airport in the world, I noticed an elderly woman trying frantically to communicate with the passengers around her. She was showing her boarding pass to anyone who would look, but they were unable to understand her Spanish and she, their English.

Unfortunately, most of what little Spanish I once knew I've long since forgotten. But I know a lot about airports, so I intervened. The Atlanta airport has 192 gates spread across 7 concourses in 2 terminals. That's 192 opportunities to fly somewhere, but only one flight would take her from Lima to Louisville. My immediate challenge was how to convince her not to get off at any of the next three train stops, then hope she would trust me enough to get off at the fourth one and follow along with me to Gate B11!

Our world abounds with religions and spokespeople telling us their version of how to know God and how to get where everyone wants to go—heaven. But there is only one way to know God and only one way to heaven. Just as only one gate would take that lost traveler from Atlanta to Louisville, the death and resurrection of Christ alone opened the way for us to come to God. Having come to see the truth about Christ and the gospel, Peter and John wanted others to know the truth of salvation through Christ alone.

QUESTION 1:

Where's a big place you'd hate to get lost?

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

ACTS 3:12-15

¹² When Peter saw this, he addressed the people: “Fellow Israelites, why are you amazed at this? Why do you stare at us, as though we had made him walk by our own power or godliness?” ¹³ The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our ancestors, has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you handed over and denied before Pilate, though he had decided to release him. ¹⁴ You denied the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer released to you. ¹⁵ You killed the source of life, whom God raised from the dead; we are witnesses of this.

Seizing the opportunity presented by the miraculous healing of a lame man begging at the temple, Peter and John shared Christ with those who were amazed by the miracle. The message they shared, and how they shared that message, provide a great model to Christians in every age for being an effective personal witness.

First, Peter and John made it clear that neither the miracle that had taken place, nor the message they had to share, were about them. They asked the people in the crowd, “Why do you stare at us, as though we had made him walk by our own power or godliness?” (v. 12). Con artists and false teachers typically have this in common—they attempt to manipulate people for personal gain. Peter and John distinguished themselves by being honest and humble enough to deflect personal attention they received and turn the attention to the One whose power the people had seen in the miracle of the lame man being healed. Taking no credit for what had taken place, they instead immediately gave credit to God.

Being a mature disciple means we guard ourselves against the natural, prideful tendency to exploit the attention that often comes from doing good or to leverage our moment in the spotlight when we are blessed to be a part of God working through His people. Peter and John modeled this demeanor at the temple.

Second, as Peter and John turned the conversation to Jesus, they spoke clearly to the people about the reality of their problem of sin and pointed them to the death and resurrection of Jesus as the solution.

Communicating with facial expressions and hand gestures, I somehow convinced the Peruvian lady lost in the Atlanta airport which train stop was hers. As we stepped off the train, she followed close by my side until we stood before an escalator that looked like it had ascended to the heavens. Her face was painted with panic as she began tugging at my arm and stepping back from the escalator. But I knew what she didn't. That escalator was the only way she would get to her destination. So, I persisted.

She clearly didn't like the fact that I had led her to the escalator but, finally, she stepped on, and we continued our journey.

As Peter and John spoke boldly about the crucifixion of Jesus, they put the blame directly on the crowd, even going so far as to remind them—many of whom were probably there on that fateful day—of the way they had demanded Pilate release Barabbas when he had offered instead to release Jesus. When Jesus's fate was in their power, they had cried out, "Crucify him!" His blood was on their hands. No one in the crowd would have welcomed that reminder or being confronted with their sin. But becoming a disciple of Jesus always begins with the truth about our sin and our need for a Savior.

Spiritual conversations that never get to the gospel are no more helpful than a discussion with your doctor about the pain in your side that

never gets to a diagnosis or treatment. Peter and John knew the Great Physician and were quick to turn this conversation about the power of God displayed through the miracle to the saving power of God displayed in the death and resurrection of Jesus. They identified Jesus as "the source of life" who had been killed by the people but whom God raised from the dead. But they didn't stop there.

QUESTION 2:

What do you appreciate about the beginning of Peter's message?

ACTS 3:16-20

¹⁶ By faith in his name, his name has made this man strong, whom you see and know. So the faith that comes through Jesus has given him this perfect health in front of all of you. ¹⁷ "And now, brothers and sisters, I know that you acted in ignorance, just as your leaders also did. ¹⁸ In this way God fulfilled what he had predicted through all the prophets—that his Messiah would suffer. ¹⁹ Therefore repent and turn back, so that your sins may be wiped out, ²⁰ that seasons of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send Jesus, who has been appointed for you as the Messiah.

Having pointed those in the crowd to the truth of the death and resurrection of Jesus, Peter and John now called them to action. First, they should place their faith in the name of Jesus because, as they had just witnessed, faith in the name of Jesus had restored the health of the lame man. Not only was the name of Jesus powerful enough to bring healing, but the

disciples also boldly proclaimed Jesus "has been appointed to you as the Messiah" (v. 20). The name of Jesus is powerful enough to save us from our sin.

Far more than simply believing the right things about Jesus, placing faith in the name of Jesus means trusting in Him and Him alone as the source of salvation. Placing faith in the name of

Jesus means trusting in His death on the cross and His bodily resurrection as the only source of forgiveness and eternal life. He is the Messiah and by trusting in Him, our greatest need is met—the need to be spiritually healed through forgiveness and reconciliation to God.

Second, Peter and John called upon the crowd to repent. What is repentance? The disciples clarified what they meant in the call to repent: “Therefore repent and turn back, so that your sins may be wiped out” (v. 19).

The biblical understanding of repentance is much more than a mere acknowledgment of wrongdoing. In the Old Testament, two Hebrew words express the idea of repentance. The word *nacham* occurs 108 times and is translated into English as “repent” in about a third of those occurrences. In most instances, *nacham* has God as its subject. God is the one who “repents,” but a better translation might be “relents.”

A second Hebrew word, *shuv*, always has man as its subject. The word literally means “turn back” or “return.” While the verb has numerous nuances of meaning, when used in reference to spiritual relations, the term refers to turning back from God or turning back to God, as well as turning back from evil, and is typically translated as “repent.”

In the New Testament, the Greek verb *metanoeo* is often translated as “repent,” as here in Acts. The word is a conjunction of the preposition *meta*, meaning “with, together with, to, towards,” and the verbal form of *noeo*, meaning “to perceive, observe, understand.” *Noeo* is derived from *nous*, meaning “mind” or “intellect.” Occurring thirty-four times in the

New Testament, the word literally means “to think differently about something or to have a change of mind.” In its noun form (*metanoia*), occurring twenty-three times, the word signifies the whole process of change that takes place when one comes to faith.

John the Baptist preached “a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins” (Mark 1:4), and Jesus proclaimed, “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news” (Mark 1:15). By its biblical definition, repentance is much more than an acknowledgment of sin. It’s a change of mind about sin—a turning away from sin.

Peter and John made it clear to the crowd that turning from sin is an essential part of the biblical requirement for salvation. They issued a clear call: “Therefore repent and turn back, so that your sins may be wiped out” (v. 19). Without genuine repentance, the gospel has not been fully received.

QUESTION 3:

How should the ignorance of God we see in our culture affect the way we share the gospel?

QUESTION 4:

What seasons of refreshing have you seen come from the presence of the Lord?

Engage

MY TESTIMONY

Use the space below to describe what you were like before coming to know Jesus, how you came to know Jesus, and what your life has been like since coming to know Jesus.

My life before coming to know Jesus:

How I came to know Jesus:

My life after coming to know Jesus:

ACTS 3:24-26

²⁴ “In addition, all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those after him, have also foretold these days. ²⁵ You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your ancestors, saying to Abraham, And all the families of the earth will be blessed through your offspring. ²⁶ God raised up his servant and sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your evil ways.”

The disciples closed their message with a personal appeal based upon three realities. First, the disciples highlighted the personal identity of those who had ventured to the temple: “You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your ancestors, saying to Abraham, ‘And all the families of the earth will be blessed through your offspring’” (v. 25). The disciples were pointing to God’s desire to have a personal relationship with them. Beginning with God’s call upon Abraham, God had revealed Himself in unique ways to the Jews. God’s desire was for them to know Him and to make Him known. God had blessed them and called them to be a blessing.

Next, the disciples pointed to the reality that God had sent Jesus first to the Jews: “God raised up his servant and sent him first to you to bless you . . .” (v. 26). As the son of Mary and with Joseph serving the role of his earthly father, Jesus was indisputably a Jew. From the beginning and throughout the days of his ministry, he taught in the Jewish temple and synagogues and performed miracles primarily among the Jews. This was further evidence of God’s desire for the people of Israel to know God and to make God known. God had blessed them and called them to be a blessing.

Then, with their closing words, the disciples once again pointed to the reality of the people’s

sin and their need for personal repentance: “God raised up his servant and sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your evil ways” (v. 26). A personal relationship with God always begins with faith and repentance, turning from sin and turning to Jesus as the Savior. Without faith and repentance, even the Israelites, God’s covenant people, remain spiritually lost in their sin and will spend eternity separated from God.

The gospel comes to every individual as a personal appeal, requiring a personal response, and resulting in a personal relationship. Many in our world today have the benefit of being raised by parents who know and follow Jesus. But being part of a Jewish family or a Christian family does not, in any way, resolve the problem of our sin. Every person must respond in repentance and faith in Jesus to be forgiven, have our relationship with God restored, and enjoy the ultimate blessing of eternal life.

QUESTION 5:

What are some blessings we receive through our relationship with God?

LIVE IT OUT

We can have a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Choose one of the following applications:

- **Reflect:** Have you depended upon the faith commitments of your family when it comes to your identity as a Christian? If so, this study of God's Word has made it clear that isn't going to work. Repent of your sins and place your faith in Jesus. The inside front cover of this book can help.
- **Challenge:** Who in your life might be assuming that the reputation of their family is enough for them to be a Christian? Commit to sharing with them about their need for personal faith and repentance.
- **Cross Cultures:** If you have friends who follow a different faith, set aside some time for study to better understand what they believe about having a relationship with God. From that understanding, engage them in a discussion about God's desire to make Himself known to them through Jesus.


