

ACTS 2

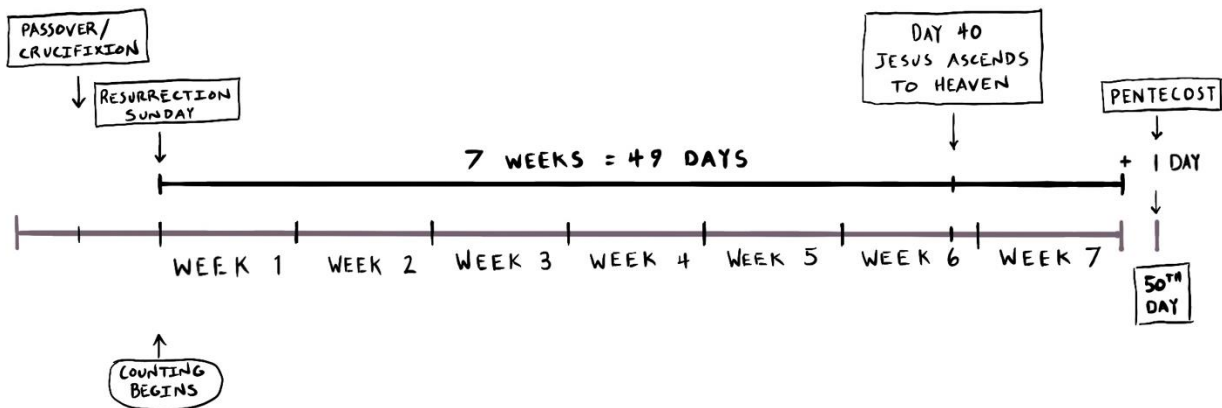
Act 2:1 When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place.

Act 2:2 And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.

Act 2:3 And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them.

Act 2:4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

- What was the day of Pentecost?
 - Pentecost was one of the 3 major Jewish feasts days established by God in His Old Testament Law.
 - In the Old Testament, the day was known as the Feast of Weeks (Ex 34:22) and the Feast of Harvest (Ex 23:16).
 - The word “Pentecost” is a Greek word signifying the 50th part of a thing, or the 50th in order. Among the Jews, it became associated with the 50th day feast (Barnes).
 - Beginning the Sunday after the Passover Feast, the Jews were instructed to count off 50 days. Pentecost was to be celebrated on the 50th day (always a Sunday).
 - Lev 23:15-16 “You shall count seven full weeks from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering. You shall count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath. Then you shall present a grain offering of new grain to the LORD.
 - *There is some debate about what day the counting was supposed to start. There was a day of “holy convocation” the day after Passover (15th of the month). Some believe the counting was supposed to start the day after the holy convocation (a special Sabbath day). If that is true, Pentecost could have fallen on any day of the week.
 - To learn more about the Feast of Weeks check out Leviticus 23:15-22.



- By the first century, the Jews were also celebrating the Pentecost as the day Moses received the Law on Mount Sinai.
 - o This appears to have been based more in tradition than historical fact.
 - o To my knowledge, the Old Testament scriptures make no mention of Moses receiving the Law around Pentecost.
 - o But it is interesting to note that God’s New Covenant (Testament) with men kicked off on the day the Jews celebrated the giving of the Old Testament.
- So, as Acts 2 opens, thousands, if not millions, of Jews were visiting Jerusalem for Pentecost, and among them, were a small number of Jesus’ disciples.
- Verse 1 tells us “they were all together in one place.”
- Who is meant by “they”?
 - o “They” is a pronoun.
 - o A pronoun is a word used to stand for or take the place of a noun.
 - o In order to identify the noun the pronoun refers to, you look for its antecedent.
 - o The antecedent is the person, place, or thing to which the pronoun refers.
 - o To properly define “they” in Acts 2:1, we need to look back at the nouns at the end of chapter 1.
 - o Chapter 1 concludes with a discussion between the 120 disciples (Acts 1:15).
 - o The very last verse specifically mentions the 11 Apostles (Acts 1:26; after the addition of Matthias, there were once again 12 Apostles).
 - o So, we have two possible candidates, the 120 disciples, or the 12 Apostles:
 - Commentators are split.

- Some suggest all 120 disciples were gathered in the “room” and the tongues of fire appeared over all of them.
 - Others suggest only the Apostles were gathered, and the tongues of fire only appeared over them.
 - It is difficult to say for sure, but I’m slightly more convinced of the second option.
 - At least three things tilt the balances in that direction for me:
 - 1. The 12 Apostles are the closest potential antecedent of the pronoun “they” in verse 1.
 - 2. In verse 11, the people of Jerusalem recognize those with the Holy Spirit as being “men of Galilee,” which would describe the 12 Apostles.
 - 3. Other texts reveal the 12 Apostles were given unique gifts by the Holy Spirit that others didn’t receive (see Acts 8:14-18).
 - Now let me counter my own arguments for the sake of critical thinking:
 - 1. The closest potential antecedent is not always the intended antecedent of the author (you have to evaluate the context).
 - 2. It is possible that all, or at least the majority, of the 120 disciples were Galileans. Jesus spent the majority of His time in the Galilee area, so it isn’t unreasonable to think His most devoted disciples were from Galilee. Additionally, the Galilean Jews would have all been in Jerusalem for Pentecost.
 - 3. If the Holy Spirit descended on all 120 with tongues of fire, it in no way limited His ability to give another special measure of His power to the 12 Apostles.
 - For the rest of this discussion, we will work under the assumption the Spirit descended only on the 12 Apostles.
- Returning to the text, the Apostles had gathered in one place.
 - We aren’t told the specific location.
 - It may have been the same upper room as in Acts 1:13.
 - What happened next was unique.
 - There was a sound like a rushing wind.
 - It doesn’t say there was a wind.
 - It says there was a sound like wind.

- The noise filled the house.
- Verse 6 tells us the noise was audible outside the house.
- This wind was a physical sign of the Spirit's presence.
- Why the sound of a great wind?
 - Jesus described the Spirit's work using the wind as an illustration in John 3.
 - The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."
 - Additionally, the word the Jews used for the Spirit of God (ruwach) was the same word they used for "breathe" and "wind."
 - Additionally, In John 20, we see Jesus breathing on the Apostles to give them the Holy Spirit.
- "Divided tongues" like fire appeared on the Apostles.
 - The term "tongues" seems to indicate the shape of the flame.
 - I hadn't thought about it before, but fire does look a bit like a tongue.



- - The shape was significant because the Holy Spirit was about to empower the tongues of the Apostles.
- When the sound of the wind had filled the house and the tongues of fire had rested on the Apostles, they were "filled with the Holy Spirit."
- Remember, in the book of Luke, Jesus' work started at His baptism when the Holy Spirit descended on Him. Likewise, we see the ministry of the Apostles beginning when they received the Holy Spirit.
- The Holy Spirit gave them "utterances."
- We will discuss these utterances in the upcoming verses.
- This was part of the "promise of the Father" Jesus had foretold in Luke 24:49.

- The Holy Spirit came to empower the Apostles to do the work God called them to do.
- The Apostles, or any group of men for that matter, weren't wise enough to execute God's plan without some help. The Holy Spirit equipped them for the job.
 - Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”
 - Joh 14:26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

Act 2:5 Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven.

Act 2:6 And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language.

Act 2:7 And they were amazed and astonished, saying, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?”

Act 2:8 And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language?

Act 2:9 Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,

Act 2:10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome,

Act 2:11 both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.”

Act 2:12 And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?”

Act 2:13 But others mocking said, “They are filled with new wine.”

- It makes sense that God waited until the day of Pentecost for this momentous event, because it granted the greatest exposure to the greatest possible variety of Jews.
 - Jews had travelled from all over the world to be in Jerusalem for the feast.
 - They saw the Spirit's power and heard about Jesus from the preaching of the Apostles (we will read one of the Apostle's sermons beginning in verse 14).

- Then they would have taken the news back home to their fellow Jews in their hometown.
- Evidently, the sound of the rushing mighty wind was loud enough to be heard outside on the street.
- Upon hearing the noise, people started to gather.
- But as they approached the room, they took notice of another unique sound, the sound of their native languages being spoken by the Apostles.
 - The Apostles were speaking about the “mighty works of God” in the languages of the Parthians, Mesopotamians, Jews, Asians, Egyptians, Romans, Arabians, and more.
 - It didn’t take the crowds long to realize the Apostles were Galileans.
 - They may not have known them personally, but they knew there was no possible way a small group of Galileans Jews were fluent in such a variety of languages.
 - It was inconceivable, especially considering the limited educational tools of their day.
- It’s important to emphasize these “tongues” were actual spoken languages.
 - There is a lot of misinformation in the denominational world about “tongues.”
 - In Acts 2, the Holy Spirit gave the Apostles the ability to speak world languages they had never studied. This wasn’t some kind of heavenly language made up of words no one could understand.
- The nature of the miracle:
 - There are two theories about how this miracle may have worked.
 - Some suggest each Apostle spoke one language at once.
 - So, for example, Andrew spoke Latin to the visitors from Rome, but then turned to the Jews of Egyptian origin and spoke to them in the Egyptian language.
 - Or maybe James was talking to three men who all spoke different languages, and one-by-one translated his message into their unique languages.
 - The other suggestion is that the words spoken by the Apostles were miraculously translated into different languages in the hearing of the people, so that each foreigner heard the message simultaneously in their own language.
 - I haven’t been able to decide.

The Nations Gathered for Pentecost (Acts 2:9-11)

Act 2:9 Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,

Act 2:10 Phrygia and Pamphilia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome,

Act 2:11 both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God," (ESV)



**You can download this map as a printable on our website under the “Resources” tab.*

- There were two responses to the Apostles speaking in tongues:
 - o 1. Many of the people were amazed and listened to the Apostles in awe.
 - o 2. Others mocked, and suggested the Apostles were drunk.
- APPLICATION:
 - o It doesn't matter how awe inspiring something is, there will always be those who are critical.
 - o It doesn't matter how obvious something is, there will always be deniers.
 - o It doesn't matter how true something is, there will always be those who mock it as foolishness.
 - o If we are boldly speaking the truth, there will be no way to escape criticism and mockery.
 - o We just need to get used to the fact that there will always be those who oppose what's true.

- Pray that God will continue to give you courage to speak the truth in the face of your enemies.
- *Acts 2:11 mentions “Jews and proselytes,” for more information on proselytes, check out our handout entitled, “What was a proselyte” on the Printables Page of our website.

Act 2:14 But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words.

Act 2:15 For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day.

Act 2:16 But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel:

Act 2:17 ““And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams;

Act 2:18 even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.

Act 2:19 And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke;

Act 2:20 the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day.

Act 2:21 And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

- Peter stood up in front of the crowd that had gathered and started teaching them.
 - His message starts in verse 14 and ends in verse 40.
 - There is no question the Holy Spirit helped Peter as he spoke these words, because Peter showed a deep comprehension of the Old Testament scriptures and how they related to Jesus’ life and work.
 - This is clearly a “changed” Peter than the one we were introduced to in the gospels.
- The first thing Peter did was reject the idea that him and his friends were drunk.
 - He dismissed the idea as ridiculous because it was only the 3rd hour of the day.
 - Their 3rd hour was about our 9:00am.
 - **For more information about how the Jews and Romans kept time, check out our handout available under the “Resources” tab of our website.*

- The demographics of Peter's audience directly affected the way he presented his message.
 - Remember, Peter was talking to a large group of Jews.
 - These Jews came from different parts of the world, but they were united by their devotion to God and their respect for the Jewish Scriptures (the writings we call the Old Testament).
 - If they were going to be convinced that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah, they needed to be convinced by the scriptures they respected.
 - So, it makes sense that the first thing Peter did was quote a Jewish prophet, Joel (you can find the book of Joel in the 2nd part of the Old Testament).
- The prophecy of Joel:
 - Peter paraphrased Joel's prophecy in verses 17-21.
 - The original prophecy is in Joel 2:28-32.
 - Joel 2:28-32 - "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit. "And I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the LORD has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the LORD calls."
 - In the context of the book of Joel, this prophecy is part of a blessing God promised to the Jewish people. He told them a day was coming when He would restore their nation and bless them.
 - Peter told his audience they were witnessing the fulfillment of Joel's (really God's) promise.
 - Peter and his friends weren't drunk, rather God's Spirit was empowering them.
 - Joel mentions that the Spirit would bless people with visions, dreams, prophecies, etc.
 - Examples in the NT:
 - In Acts 10:3, Peter received an insightful vision just before being summoned to visit Cornelius' house.

- In Acts 16:9, Paul received a vision in the night which redirected him to preach the Gospel in Macedonia.
 - In Acts 21:10-11, the prophet Agabus prophesied by the Holy Spirit that Paul would be arrested in Jerusalem.
 - In 1 Corinthians 14:1, Paul encouraged the Church in Corinth to “pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy.”
- The Holy Spirit wasn’t going to complete His work with men on Pentecost day, He was going to continue to empower disciples during the early decades of the Church.
- So, Peter was saying that this was just the beginning of something bigger.
- The second half of Joel’s prophecy is a bit trickier to understand.
 - Verses 19-21 - And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day. And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.
 - What did Joel mean when he mentioned the sun going dark and the moon turning to blood? Sounds like the end of the world!
 - This is where knowledge of the Old Testament prophets is very valuable.
 - The Old Testament uses similar language to describe non-world ending events.
 - Although this may conjure up apocalypse style images in our minds, the minds of a Jewish audience familiar with the prophets would have been drawn back to their scriptures.
 - Isa 13:9-10 - Behold, the day of the LORD comes, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger, to make the land a desolation and to destroy its sinners from it. For the stars of the heavens and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be dark at its rising, and the moon will not shed its light.
 - This verse isn’t about the end of the world, it is about God’s punishment on the nation of Babylon.
 - Eze 32:7-8 - When I blot you out, I will cover the heavens and make their stars dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give its light. All the bright lights of heaven will I

make dark over you, and put darkness on your land, declares the Lord GOD.

- These verses aren't about the end of the world either, they are in a section of scripture where God is pronouncing judgement on Egypt.
 - This language is very similar to that used by Jesus when He prophesied God's judgement on the city of Jerusalem in 70 A.D..
 - Mat 24:29 "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.
- With this knowledge, how should we interpret verse 19-21 in context?
- In the Old Testament, the language about the sun going dark and the moon turning to blood were used figuratively to describe future days of God's judgment.
 - The same seems to be in Acts 2.
 - There will be a day, sometime in the future, when God will judge all the people who have lived on the earth.
 - 2Co 5:10 For **we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ**, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.
 - Act 17:30-31 The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because **he has fixed a day** on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."
 - Just as the prophets used this figurative language to describe days of judgement, Peter used it here to describe the great and final Judgement Day.
 - Peter said, God and the Holy Spirit would be busy working in the world before that final day.
 - This day of judgement is referred to as the "day of the Lord."
 - This same phrase is used throughout the New Testament.

- 1Co 5:5 you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the **day of the Lord**.
- 1Th 5:2 For you yourselves are fully aware that the **day of the Lord** will come like a thief in the night.
- 2Pe 3:10 But the **day of the Lord** will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.
- Peter confirmed that God was sending His Spirit to assist the disciples of Jesus and to spread the truth of God throughout the world.
- He told the people this had to occur before the “great and magnificent” day of the Lord, the final Judgement Day.
- The last section of Joel’s prophesy was a message of salvation.
 - “And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”
 - The scary news is that a day of God’s judgement is coming.
 - Even more scary is our knowledge of our own wrongdoings (the lies we’ve told, the people we’ve hurt, the trust we’ve broken, the harm we’ve done, the things we’ve stolen, the instructions we didn’t keep, the pride in our hearts, etc.)
 - But Joel prophesied that anyone who called out to God for help, would be saved from being found guilty when God judges the world.
 - But wait?! How does that work? Can God just forgive people who have done bad stuff? What if a judge did that in a modern courtroom?
 - The reason God can extend forgiveness is because of what we’ve been studying in the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John).
 - Jesus allowed Himself to be killed on a cross, even though He was innocent of any wrongdoing, because He was substituting Himself for us, and taking the punishment we deserved.
 - This is what God wanted, because He wanted to extend forgiveness mankind.
 - He wanted to offer an opportunity for men and women to receive His grace and to be saved from the final judgement.

- Why? Because He loves the souls He created.
- Joel said that a person would need to call “upon the name of the Lord” to be saved from their guilt.
 - This is the essence of the good news of Jesus.
 - This is the message that Christians want non-Christians to know.
 - (1) A judgement day is coming.
 - (2) Everyone is guilty because everyone has sinned.
 - (3) But Jesus died so we could be forgiven.
 - (4) In order to fix your situation, you need to go to God for help.
 - You must go to God for salvation!
 - Notice what the text doesn’t say:
 - It doesn’t say, “Those who do the most good deeds will be saved.”
 - It doesn’t say, “Those who are the most disciplined in religious practice will be saved.”
 - It doesn’t say, “God loves everyone, so everyone is going to be okay in the end.”
 - Those who humbly approach God and call out to Him for grace are the ones who will be saved.
 - At the end of this chapter, we are going to see Peter’s listeners following up on this point and asking him how they could become recipients of God’s grace and forgiveness.
- APPLICATION:
 - Some people accuse Christians of being arrogant for claiming their faith is the only way to heaven.
 - But it was the Holy Spirit who was making the claim in Acts 2.
 - Jesus claimed the same thing during His time on earth.
 - Jesus is the only way to heaven because He is the only One who paid the extraordinarily high price to make grace available.
 - We shouldn’t be ashamed to say Jesus is the only source of salvation.
 - Truth is exclusive by nature.

- Don't let the world talk you into believing you should suppress the truth because it might offend someone.
- Better to tell someone the truth and offend them than lie to them and let them believe they are getting to heaven some other way.

Act 2:22 “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—

- Peter started this conversation quoting a source of authority for the Jews.
- These people were waiting for the manifestation of Joel's prophecy.
- Peter will now explain to them how Jesus of Nazareth, who they had just killed, was the key figure in the fulfilment of Joel's words.
- Joel spoke of God showing signs and wonders (verse 19-21) to His people.
- Peter told his listeners they had just been privileged to witness a multitude of miracles at the hands of Jesus.
- And that through those miracles, God fulfilled, in part, Joel's prophecy and attested to the identity of Jesus as the Christ
 - Attest - provide or serve as clear evidence of (Oxford).
 - Jesus' miracles were proof His work was compatible with the words of the prophets.
 - Jesus' miracles were proof He had the approval of God.
 - Peter is beginning to connect the dots for his fellow Jews.
 - Just like with the Apostles, Jesus wasn't the kind of Christ the Jews expected, so they were going to need a little guided teaching to help them see how God's woven through all of these events.
 - APPLICATION:
 - Try to be as patient when teaching others as you wish someone had been with you when you were first learning.
 - Don't forget how little you once knew.

Act 2:23 this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

- Next, Peter moved on to Jesus' death.
- Like the Apostles, the common Jewish population wasn't expecting the Christ to die on a cross, so Peter needed to communicate to them that Jesus' death wasn't a mistake.
 - o It had always been part of God's plan.
 - o Jesus even foretold His own death on several occasions.
 - Mat 16:21 - From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.
 - Mat 17:22-23 - As they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them, **“The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him, and he will be raised on the third day.”** And they were greatly distressed.
 - o God's plan was for Jesus to die to become the sacrifice for the world's sins.
 - o God knew about the sinfulness of the people of Jerusalem, He knew they would kill His Son if He sent Him there, and with that knowledge God wove together a plan to save those wicked people in spite of themselves.
- Who were those wicked people?
 - o Specifically speaking, they were the people Peter was talking to.
 - o He didn't waste any time accusing them of unjustly killing Jesus (verse 23).
 - o Generally speaking, all sinners throughout history (which includes you and me) are responsible for Jesus' death.
 - o Jesus had to die to make salvation available to each of us.
- Peter said Jesus was killed by lawless men.
 - o The Pharisees, Sadducees, elders, and priests who were supposed to be upholders of God's righteous Law, perverted the Law to kill Jesus.
 - o Herod, who was responsible for justice among the Jews, did not fulfill his duties faithfully.
 - o Pilate, who was charged by Rome to uphold the Law, failed to give Jesus justice during His trial.
- APPLICATION:
 - o Biased judges are a danger to society and good people.
 - o Thank God the Judge of the Universe cannot be corrupted, bought, or peer pressured into perverting justice.

- A perfect upholding of justice is part of what makes God's Kingdom and everlasting kingdom.

Act 2:24 God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.

- Jesus' death and the sins that murdered Him were the bad news, but verse 24 presents the good news.
- Jesus resurrected from death 3 days after His crucifixion.
- God raised Jesus loosing him from the hold of death.
 - No one escapes the binding of death.
 - We got old and immobile.
 - We lie stiff on our sickbeds.
 - Then we die and stop moving entirely.
 - We can't escape death's cords.
 - But Jesus did!
- After being wrapped in grave cloths, Jesus shook off death's hold and walked out of the tomb.
- It wasn't possible for a force like death to hold power over the Son of God.
- Jesus remaining dead also wasn't possible because the Old Testament scriptures prophesied it wouldn't happen, which we will see in the upcoming verses.

Act 2:25 For David says concerning him, "I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken;

Act 2:26 therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; my flesh also will dwell in hope.

Act 2:27 For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption.

Act 2:28 You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.'

- Verses 25-28 are a quote from king David in Psalm 16:8-11.
- Religious Jewish people, like those Peter was addressing, would have known Psalm 16 and had high respect for its author.

- In verse 25, king David expressed his confidence in God as his protector. The Lord was always in front of him and beside him to lead and assist.
- In verses 26, David shared the gladness that filled his heart, the praise on his tongue, and the hope he felt about the future.
 - Why?
 - Where did he find hope? If life is meaningless and we are all destined to die, what is there to sustain hope and gladness of heart?
- He gave the source of his joy in verse 27.
 - He had hope because there was reason to believe he wouldn't be left in the grave.
 - His soul would not be left in "Hades."
 - What was "Hades."
 - "The idea which was conveyed by the word Sheol, or Hades, was not properly a grave or sepulcher, but that dark, unknown state, including the grave, which constituted the dominions of the dead" (Barnes).
 - *For more information on the term Sheol or Hades check out our word study handout in the Printables tab of our website.*
 - Additionally, his hope was based on the fact that God wouldn't allow His "Holy One" to see corruption.
 - Who was the Holy One?
 - The term used could refer to David or someone else.
 - If you look up the Hebrew word translated "Holy One" in Psalm 16 and see how it is used throughout the rest of the Psalms, you'll find varying translations.
 - Sometimes it translates "Holy One" as a title for God.
 - Other times it's translated "saints" or "godly man."
 - If you read Psalm 16 in context, it appears David is talking about himself.
 - His heart is full of gladness and hope because God won't leave his soul in the darkness of the grave and he, a godly man, won't "see corruption."
 - The term translated "corruption" carries the idea of decay or decomposition in the grave.
 - But wait... how is it possible that David was describing himself in Psalm 16?

- David died just like every other man and his body decomposed just like every other man's.
- Peter is going to help his listener's answer this question.

Act 2:29 “Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.

Act 2:30 Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne,

Act 2:31 he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption.

- Peter started his explanation of Psalm 16 by pointing out the obvious, the same dilemma we just mentioned.
- David was dead!
 - Not only was he dead, but the Jews knew exactly where he was buried.
 - If they wanted, they could have exhumed his body and looked at his very decayed skeleton.
 - So... what was he talking about in Psalm 16?
- Peter explained David's words as a prophecy.
- In Psalm 16, God was speaking through David about the future.
- In Acts 2:30, Peter mentions an oath God made to David.
 - This oath is found in 2 Samuel 7:13.
 - God promised David He would “establish the throne of his kingdom forever.”
 - God was going to raise up a king to reign eternally on David's throne.
 - If a person is going to reign forever, what do they have to avoid? Death and corruption! They must have power over death!
 - There is only one person who could claim that power.
 - Jesus was the king who would sit forever on David's throne.
- David's prophecy in Psalm 16 is describing one who would come in the future who would represent him and would fulfill the promise God made to him by escaping the darkness of the grave (Hades) and the corruption typically found there.
- Jesus was not just a saint or godly man, He was the genuine “Holy One,” He was God in the flesh.

- You must suspect many of the Jews who knew Psalm 16 were curious about the explanation of David's words.
 - o Before the resurrection of Jesus, David's representative, there wasn't a way to explain David's descent into the grave.
 - o But now, the Holy Spirit had revealed the truth.
 - o David was prophesying of the Christ.
- You see how Peter was connecting the dots for his Jewish audience.
- He was making the case for Jesus from their sources of authority, the words of their respected ancestors.
- APPLICATION:
 - o The way we present the truth to people can differ based on a person's unique background.
 - o The way Peter talks to the Jews in Acts 2 is very different than the approach Paul takes when talking to a Gentile crowd in Athens in Acts 17.
 - o Before you try to teach anyone, consider their background and the things that are important to them.

Act 2:32 This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses.

Act 2:33 Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.

- There were hundreds of witnesses to Jesus' resurrection according to the Gospel writers and Paul in 1 Corinthians 15.
- While most of Peter's audience probably hadn't been eyewitnesses of the risen Jesus, they no doubt would have heard the news when they arrived in town for Pentecost.
- It's clear the news had spread far and wide and people weren't believing the lie spread by the chief priests and guards that the Apostles stole Jesus' body.
- Peter's use of David's prophecies would have further convinced questioning Jews that resurrection was the answer to the empty tomb.
- Peter continued his case in verse 33, telling the people that the scene playing out before their eyes was proof that Jesus was back on the throne with God.
 - o Early morning alcohol (verse 13) wasn't a sufficient answer to explain the Apostles ability to speak in languages they had never studied.
 - o They were being empowered by the Spirit of God.

- The same Spirit Jesus promised to the Apostles in verses like John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13; and Acts 1:8.
 - Joh 14:26 But the Helper, **the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name**, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.
 - In John 7:39, John wrote the Spirit of God would be given after Jesus was glorified.
 - When was Jesus glorified? When ascended back to His exalted throne in Heaven with God.
 - When that happened, God would send the gift of the Holy Spirit to Jesus' disciples to empower them to be witnesses of His resurrection (Acts 1:8).
- Jesus made all of these promises about sending the Spirit before He died.
- Now that the Spirit had arrived in power, it was evidence that Jesus kept His promises, escaped death, and was once again with God in Heaven.
- If Jesus was a lying fraud, God certainly wouldn't have sent heavenly power to His followers.

Act 2:34 For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, “The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand,

Act 2:35 until I make your enemies your footstool.”

- In verse 34, Peter goes back to King David and cites another one of his statements in the Psalms.
- The quotation, “The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool” is from Psalm 110:1.
- David said, the Lord, referring to God, said to his Lord, referring to someone greater than David, sit with me at my throne.
 - Who was the one greater than David?
 - Jesus had asked the Pharisees about this very verse in Matthew 22:41-46.
 - They didn't know how to explain it.
 - But now that Jesus had resurrected the Holy Spirit through Peter was going to explain it to the people.

- David wasn't talking about himself in this verse, he never ascended up to Heaven to sit on God's throne, he died just like every other man.
- If not David, who?
- There weren't many people who were considered greater than David in Jewish history.
- Who had the right to claim lordship over the great king David?
- Answer: Jesus, the Messiah, the divine Son of God.
- When David wrote Psalm 110:1 he was being directed by the Spirit of God (Mark 12:36) to write about the Christ who was to come.
- He wrote that the Messiah would be greater than Him, so great in fact, that He would be lifted up to Heaven to sit with God on His throne.
- Peter was telling the Pentecost crowd that Jesus was the "Lord" David spoke about.
 - He was greater than David.
 - And there was evidence (the power of the Holy Spirit) that He was in Heaven with God.

Act 2:36 Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."

- Peter had just laid out a series of evidence:
 - The tomb was empty.
 - Joel's prophecy in Joel 2.
 - David's prophecy in Psalm 16.
 - David's prophecy in Psalm 110.
 - The Holy Spirit's power working through them.
- Based on all this evidence, the Jews (the house of Israel) could know with certainty that they had killed the prophesied Messiah.
 - They had killed the hope of their nation.
 - The one who they were supposed to be anticipating.
 - The one who was promised to restore their nation.
 - The murdered the Holy One.
- BUT... Although they had failed miserably, Jesus did not!

- And all the evidence Peter presented was proof that Jesus conquered death and was at that moment sitting in Heaven as the Anointed Lord of all (Christ means “anointed one”).

Act 2:37 Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

- How did the people respond to Peter’s case for Jesus being the Christ?
- They were convinced and convicted.
 - o They were convinced Jesus was the Messiah who had been prophesied about.
 - o They were convicted of their sin of killing Him.
- What could be worse, as a Jew, than killing the man who was supposed to be the savior of your people.
- Fortunately for the Jews, there was evidence to prove Jesus had resurrected from their murderous plot, which gave them hope that something could still be done to fix their mistake.
- They asked the Apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

Act 2:38 And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

- What the people needed more than anything was forgiveness for their sin of rejecting Jesus.
 - o Sin is rebellion against God.
 - o Doing something of which He wouldn’t approve.
 - o It’s when we work against God and His will.
- Peter mentioned 2 things the people needed to do to be forgiven.
- First, Peter told them they needed to repent.
 - o They had been living in rebellion to God’s will, rejecting His teachings, killing His Anointed One.
 - o They needed to turn their hearts and their actions to align with God’s work in the world.
 - o Rather than fighting Him, they needed to join Him.

- They needed to put their old life behind them and start a new life, which ties into what Peter told them to do next.
- Second, Peter told them they needed to be baptized.
 - We've already been introduced to the concept of baptism in the Gospels.
 - John the Baptist was baptizing people in preparation for the arrival of Jesus at the beginning of Luke's gospel (Luke 3:3).
 - John prophesied that Jesus would baptize people with the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:16).
 - Jesus was baptized (Luke 3:21-22).
 - Jesus baptized those who wanted to become disciples (John 3:22; 4:1).
 - Before Jesus ascended to Heaven, He instructed His followers to "make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."
 - Throughout the writings of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John we see a pattern that being baptized was part of becoming a disciple.
 - So, Peter's instruction to be baptized wasn't anything new to those familiar with John and Jesus' ministry.
 - That said, baptism did take on a deeper and richer meaning after Jesus' death and resurrection.
 - Paul talks about this in Romans 6.
 - Romans 6:2b-5 How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? **We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death**, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, **we too might walk in newness of life**. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.
 - Rom 6:11 So you also must consider yourselves **dead to sin and alive to God** in Christ Jesus.
 - Baptism associates' people with Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection.
 - Jesus died on the cross to offer people freedom from the enslavement of sin, He was buried in a tomb, and then rose to life again by the power of God.

- Those who receive baptism are dying to their old life of enslavement to sin, they are buried (under the water in baptism), and then they are raised up to “newness of life.”
- Those who rise to new life are a “new creation.”
 - 2Co 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.
 - Their life of sin is behind them and their life for God is ahead of them.
 - You’ll often hear this process referred to as the “new birth.”
 - We are born again as children of God and brought into God’s family.
 - Galatians 3:26-27 - For in Christ Jesus you are all **sons of God**, through faith. For as many of you as were **baptized into Christ** have put on Christ.
 - Jesus spoke to Nicodemus about the new birth in John 3.
 - He told Nicodemus a person needed to be “born again” to be a part of God’s family (God’s Kingdom).
 - When Nicodemus asked Him how that happened, Jesus replied, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God” (John 3:5).
 - If I understand the text correctly, the “water” is a reference to baptism.
 - We will talk about the “Spirit” in a moment (remember Peter mentioned the “gift of the Holy Spirit” in the same verse).
- We say all that to say, Peter’s instruction about baptized wasn’t anything new, this wasn’t a new formula for becoming a disciple. It was the same thing John and Jesus taught, but the meaning behind the practice was more robust now that Jesus had resurrected.
- We are going to see this same pattern for becoming a disciple continue as we read through the rest of the New Testament, especially in the book of Acts.
 - We see it in Acts 8 when the Samaritans believe Philip’s preaching.
 - The Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts 8:36.
 - Cornelius’ conversion in Acts 10.

- The Jailer in Philippi (and his family) in Acts 16.
- Most famously in Paul’s recounting of his own conversion in Acts 22.
 - The resurrected Jesus appeared to Paul on his way to the city of Damascus.
 - Up to that point Paul had been persecuting Jesus’ disciples.
 - When he realized Jesus was the Christ and had actually resurrected from the dead, he asked Him, “What shall I do, Lord?”
 - Paul’s question was the exact same as those on the Day of Pentecost.
 - Jesus told him to go into Damascus where he would receive instructions.
 - God sent a man named Ananias to Paul.
 - Ananias told Paul, “And now why do you wait? Rise and **be baptized and wash away your sins**, calling on His name” (Acts 22:16).
 - After believing in the resurrected Jesus, Paul wanted to know what he needed to do to have his sin (his rebellion) forgiven. Ananias told him exactly what Peter told the Jews in Acts 2.

- APPLICATION:

- Baptism is not something to be put off, delayed, or disregarded.
- You will find a lot of churches that deemphasize baptism.
- They teach baptism as if it’s unimportant. Almost as if it was never a part of John’s, or Jesus’, or Peter’s instructions.
- I would strongly encourage you to study the Biblical text for yourself before allowing someone to tell you baptism isn’t important. Be sure to listen to Peter, Ananias, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit before allowing a pastor, preacher, priest, or bible teacher to form an opinion for you.

- NOTE OF IMPORTANCE:

- It should be noted that those who receive baptism are receiving God’s gift of grace. Being baptized is not a work of merit whereby we earn salvation through completing good works and it is never presented in the Bible as such. The power of baptism comes from Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection and the sin defeating power therein. It is at baptism that we receive (not earn) the free gift of God (Romans 6:23).

- OBJECTIONS:

- I am aware there are many people across the spectrum of Christendom who will object to the idea that baptism is part of the pattern of becoming a disciple.
- I will address what I believe are the two most common objections in detail in a separate handout and will leave only brief comments here:
 - (1) The thief on the cross.
 - THE ARGUMENT: A person doesn't need to be baptized to become a disciple or to have their sins washed away because the thief on the cross next to Jesus was saved but not baptized.
 - RESPONSE:
 - (1) No one knows for sure if the thief on the cross was/wasn't baptized. He clearly had some understanding of Jesus' Kingdom.
 - (2) Jesus had the power to forgive a person's sins with only a word. He forgave the sins of the paralytic in Luke 5:20 and He forgave the sins of the sinful woman in Luke 7:48. Jesus was the only man in the universe who had the ability to announce a person's sins forgiven. If he made an exception to the general rule with the thief on the cross, that was His prerogative. That said, Jesus is no longer on earth to make those exceptions, therefore we follow the general pattern He taught and passed down to His disciples. The pattern Peter communicated in Acts 2.
 - (2) Baptism is a "work."
 - THE ARGUMENT: Many argue baptism is a "work" that is not necessary because we are saved by grace alone.
 - RESPONSE:
 - I would caution those who are quick to label baptism a "work of merit" to ensure their definitions are coming from the Bible and not from manmade traditions.
 - Did Jesus teach "works based salvation" when He instructed people to be baptized to become His disciples?
 - I doubt anyone would suggest as much!
 - Baptism is never presented in the Scriptures as a "work" by which we earn salvation. Quite the opposite! It is the means by which we receive the grace of God because we cannot save ourselves.

- The power of baptism is in the cross and resurrection, not in human effort.
 - I suggest, those who accuse others of teaching “works based salvation” because they emphasize baptism as part of the disciple making pattern, have allowed human tradition (especially the influence of the Protestant Reformation) to provide them with their definition of baptism, rather than the Scripture itself.
- Let’s return to verse 38 now.
 - Peter told the people to repent and be baptized and they would **receive the gift of the Holy Spirit**.
 - We’ve already discussed how the 12 Apostles received the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues at the beginning of the chapter, so was Peter promising his audience the same “gift” or was it something different?
 - If you are just reading this verse and you aren’t familiar with the rest of the Scriptures, it might appear the gift is the same.
 - But as you read the rest of the book of Acts and the rest of the New Testament, you’ll find out there were differences in the “gifts” given by the Spirit.
 - Explaining how the Spirit of God works is a lot like explaining how God works in the world... complex.
 - There are a lot of passages and factors that need to be considered when trying to form a comprehensive understanding of the nature and work of the Holy Spirit.
 - But for the sake of this study, I will try to keep things as simple as possible.
 - Let me begin this discussion by listing some of the ways the Spirit of God worked within the early Church, I will do my best to cite the verses that led me to my conclusions.
 - (1) The Holy Spirit appears to have uniquely empowered the 12 Apostles and the Apostle Paul due to their special roles as Apostles in the young Church.
 - In the early chapters of Acts, the Apostles performed large scale miraculous healings similar to those of Jesus in the Gospels (Acts 2:43; 5:12-16; 15:12).
 - The Apostles could “lay their hands” on believers and give them a gift from the Holy Spirit. These gifts included the ability to prophecy, the ability to speak in tongues, the power to heal the sick, etc (Acts 8:18; 19:6; 2 Timothy 1:6). There are no examples in the New Testament of believers receiving miraculous gift from the Spirit except through the laying on of the hands of the Apostles (I would argue the events of Acts 10 were a one time occurrence).
 - ****“Having said that, there is no positive statement anywhere in the New Testament which teaches absolutely that the miraculous gifts could only be passed by the apostles. Therefore a safe statement is to say that the most*

likely interpretation is that the gifts were only given by apostolic laying on of hands, but that this is not proven conclusively. One would do well to be humble and avoid making really strong statements based on indirect evidence” (John Oakes).

- (2) Disciples who were contemporaries of the Apostles could receive special power from the Holy Spirit (to heal, prophecy, speak in tongues, etc.) to be used for the good of the Church if one of the Apostles “laid their hands” on them.
 - We see examples of this all throughout the New Testament, especially within the book of Acts.
 - In Acts 6, Stephen did “great wonders and signs” among the people after the Apostles laid their hands on him (Acts 6:6-8).
 - Paul wrote about the gifts given to the Christians in Corinth (1 Corinthians 12:7-11).
 - Timothy received a gift after Paul laid his hands on him (2 Timothy 1:6).
 - If these gifts could only be given by the Apostles, it means they ceased to exist a few decades after the last Apostle’s death.
 - To my knowledge, there is no positive statement in the scriptures affirming this truth, but the conclusion is assumed based on the available information.
- (3) All believers, beginning on the day of Pentecost and continuing to the modern day, receive the Holy Spirit when they are baptized and “born again” (John 3). The Holy Spirit dwells in the heart of God’s people.
 - Although there is some debate on this point, I believe the scriptures teach the Holy Spirit dwells within God’s children (Christians), and this is what Peter was promising to his audience in Acts 2:38.
 - Rom 8:9 You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.
 - Rom 8:11 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.
 - 1Co 3:16 Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?
 - 1 Co 6:19-20 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

- We already discussed John 3 and the new birth by water and the Spirit. We are born again by the Holy Spirit's power and He remains within us as we begin our walk as a disciple.
 - Joh 3:5-6 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.
 - Tit 3:5 he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,
 - After we are born again by the Spirit, we are no longer guided by our flesh (our old sin preferring self) but by the Spirit of God.
 - Rom 8:5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.
 - Rom 8:9 You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.
 - The Spirit's dwelling in our hearts isn't the same as the laying on of the hands of the Apostles. We can't perform miracles, we don't have supernatural knowledge, and we can't speak different languages without studying.
 - That said, God's Spirit within His children is very important!
 - God's children have a special purpose and are set apart from the rest of the world.
 - They are bought by the blood of Jesus, and the Spirit within them is a sign of their sanctification (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).
- I should mention that there are those who interpret the "gift of the Holy Spirit" differently.
 - Some people believe the gift of the Holy Spirit simply refers to salvation. I think this suggestion has some merit but considering the rest of the book of Acts and the rest of the New Testament, I believe the interpretation above is a better solution.
 - Others affirm that all Christians throughout time receive a gift similar to those bestowed by the laying on of the hands of the Apostles. They believe these gifts can manifest through miracles, even in the modern age. I would object to this view for at least 2 reasons:
 - 1. I don't think the biblical text supports this interpretation. I am not aware of any reason, textually speaking, to believe miraculous gifts from the Holy Spirit continued being passed down in the

Church after the death of the Apostles. Additionally, there is reason to believe not all Christians, even in the first century, received miraculous gifts from the Holy Spirit.

- 2. In my mind, there is a significant lack of evidence in the world to show that miraculous gifts are given to Christians. We don't see the kinds of miracles described in the Bible in our modern world. The miracles in the Gospels and in Acts were public, undeniable, provable, displays of God's power. In Acts 5, Peter's shadow was healing the sick of the suburbs of Jerusalem. In Acts 6, Stephen was "doing great wonders and signs among the people." We just don't see these kinds of miracles today and we haven't for centuries.
- I also want to mention that our discussion about the work of the Holy Spirit above is in no way intended to be a comprehensive statement about the way the Holy Spirit worked/works in the world.
 - God is bigger than any of us can imagine.
 - He is more complex than any of us can fathom.
 - He is working in the world in ways we are completely unaware of.
 - The Bible writers never set out to write a detailed description of all the ways God interacts with the world He created.
 - We can speak affirmatively about the information we are given, but we also need to recognize there is a great deal we do not know, because we are not told, about how the Spirit of God works in the world.

Act 2:40 And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation."

- Compared to most modern sermons, Peter's was remarkably short.
- A person can say a lot when their words are carefully selected.
- That said, the text informs us there were many more conversations that went on that day.
- Peter encouraged his hearers to step out of their "crooked" generation and honor Jesus as the Christ.
 - Why were the Jews called crooked?
 - Because many of them strayed off the path of truth into a crooked form of religion.
 - As we study the rest of the New Testament, we'll find out most of the Jewish nation rejected Jesus.
 - That was due, in part, to the crookedness of the religious teachers.

- The most crooked thing they did was the murder of Jesus.
 - We'll see them continue to resist God in the upcoming chapters.
- The Apostles were searching for people who were brave enough to be the exception to the rule.
- It wouldn't have been easy to be a follower of Jesus in those days.
- Those who stepped out in faith probably lost friends, family relationships, and the respect of their contemporaries.
- When someone changes their life, especially in a drastic way, they need support!
 - It is very hard to be the exception to the rule, and to stand out from our peers, when there isn't anyone standing beside us.
 - When we lose people we love, we need other people to step up and fill those gaps.
 - It is very challenging to remain committed to positive life changes when we are alone and without encouragers.
- The Church was never designed to be an individual affair.
- We will see how the young believers supported each other in verses 42-47.

Act 2:41 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

- 3,000 people opened their hearts and minds to the teaching of the Holy Spirit, were baptized, and added to the body of believers, the Church.
- According to Strong's Greek dictionary, the Greek word translated "church" means "a *calling out*, that is (concretely) a popular *meeting*."
- The Church was and is a group of people who are "called out" of their sinful generation and committed to Jesus as the Christ.

Act 2:42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

- The new Christians were committed to the Holy Spirit's instructions (the Apostle's teaching), to fellowship, to sharing meals together, and to prayer.
 - They knew they needed to Holy Spirit to guide them.
 - They knew they needed friendship and support from other believers in order to stay strong.
 - They knew they needed to keep company with those who shared their values.
 - And they knew they needed to talk to God to thank Him for His care and to make their requests to Him.
- Are we as modern Christians "devoted" to these things?
 - Being devoted to something means making it a priority.
 - Being devoted means you do a thing with frequency and consistency.
 - Being devoted to something means sometimes you do that thing even when you don't feel like doing it.
- APPLICATION:

- Fellowship isn't optional for the success of the Church.
- Often, we treat getting together with other Christians for a potluck or gathering as "extra church stuff."
- We know we are supposed to show up for the "worship service" but "fellowship stuff" isn't necessary if we have a stomachache, or a ball game, or homework.
- The Bible never downplays fellowship as a spiritual discipline worthy of lesser devotion.
 - You can't have a strong church if your people don't know each other.
 - You can't have a strong church if you aren't close enough to know each other's needs.
 - You can't have a strong church if the extent of your relationship with fellow Christians is a conversation in the lobby after "worship services."
- If we want to be a part of a church like the early Church, we need to be devoted the way they were devoted.
- Heb 10:24-25 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Act 2:43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.

- The Holy Spirit granted the Apostles the ability to work miracles to prove their message was from God.
- As we will see in the next chapter, these miracles were performed in public and in the presence of believers and skeptics alike.

Act 2:44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common.

Act 2:45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.

- The early days of the Church were marked by extraordinary generosity and commitment to the community of believers.
- Those who put their faith in Jesus were selling their possessions and contributing the proceeds to the Church collective.
- **APPLICATION:**
 - Jesus' Kingdom is to be filled with people of extraordinary generosity.
 - People who understand the generosity of God, Jesus, and the Spirit will not be stingy towards others.
- How should we apply this example in the modern Church?
 - I usually hear this passage taught in one of two ways.
 - Either the teacher is sold out on the idea that Christians need to mimic the Acts 2 Church and begin offloading all of their personal property, or they skim over this

passage, making brief comments about the unique context of Acts 2, and suggesting mimicry of this example would equate to communism.

- I think we have a lot to learn from this text, and rather than embracing or dismissing it on its extremes, we can find a middle ground (biblically based) for application.
- With that said, let's discuss some of the factors we need to consider to properly apply this passage.
 - (1) Context.
 - It's true that the context of this passage is unique.
 - Many Jews who became believers were travelling to Jerusalem for the Passover Feast.
 - For some, their journey took them far from home and away from their jobs.
 - After hearing the gospel and becoming disciples, many probably wanted/needed to extend their stay in Jerusalem to continue in learning and fellowship with other believers.
 - This would have created financial needs for housing, food, etc.
 - The contributions of the believers may have been primarily focused on meeting those short-term needs.
 - That said, there is no affirmative statement in Acts 2-5 that says the early Church's generosity was only for that purpose, therefore it would be irresponsible to dismiss the early Church's example as no longer applicable to the modern Church.
 - (2) The disciples were not commanded to contribute.
 - This becomes clear in Acts 5 where an account of a couple's contribution is recounted.
 - The couple, Ananias and Sapphira, lied about their contribution, and when confronted about it, Peter asked them, "While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart?" (Acts 5:4).
 - They weren't obligated to give; it was their choice.
 - (3) There is no universal command that Christians cannot possess property.
 - In fact, there are several statements in the New Testament that make it clear disciples did retain possessions.
 - When Paul asked the Corinthian church to contribute something to the needy church in Jerusalem, he didn't tell them their possessions needed to be liquidated and added to a community fund, he told each of them to lay aside some money that would be ready for collection when he arrived.
 - In his letters, Paul mentions several Christians who owned houses and let the church meet in them (Rom 16:5; 1Cor 16:19; Col 4:15; Phm 1:2).
 - (4) The early Church understood their possessions were given to them by God for God's purposes.

- The early believers were determined to build God’s Kingdom.
 - They knew they were not building a kingdom on earth where their houses and money mattered.
 - If their money could be used in a meaningful way to invest in God’s Kingdom, they were ready to liquidate physical assets to reinvest in spiritual ones.
- (5) There is no doubt this act of generosity effected the earthly investments of the disciples.
 - The believers were selling things that would have “secured” their financial future, from an earthly standpoint.
 - I point this out because many, especially in the more affluent parts of the world, are on an endless quest to “secure” their financial futures through investment and savings.
 - In my experience, they are often the quickest to dismiss great acts of selfless generosity as financially irresponsible.
 - Having looked at a few of these factors, how should we apply the Acts 2 example in the modern Church?
 - First, believers need to be marked by extraordinary generosity.
 - That generosity does not require us to sell all our possessions.
 - Our generosity is enabled when we actually believe Jesus’ promises to care for us (Matthew 6:19-34).
 - Understand that when you “give” to the Church, you are investing in something that will give you and others an eternal return.
 - In light of eternity, sometimes the responsible thing to do is to take a loss on our physical investments to invest in the Kingdom of God.
 - Jesus is the embodiment of the generosity of God, therefore give with the openhandedness fitting of those who bear His image.
 - “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose” (Jim Elliot).

Act 2:46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts,
 Act 2:47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.