

## Acts 2 vs 22-47 Peter's Sermon results in 3,000 baptisms.

**Act 2:22-24** *"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. 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.*

But who is the Lord? Peter will next announce the startling news that this Jesus whom they had crucified is both Lord and Christ. He does so first by speaking of the life of Jesus, then His death, resurrection, ascension, and finally His glorification at the right hand of God the Father. If they had any illusions that Jesus was still in a Judean tomb, Peter will soon disabuse their minds! They must be told that the One they had murdered is in heaven, and they must still reckon with Him.

Here then is the flow of the apostle's argument: Jesus of Nazareth was demonstrated to be a Man from God by the many miracles He performed in the power of God (v. 22). In His determined purpose and foreknowledge, God delivered Him into the hands of the Jewish people. They, in turn, turned Him over to the Gentiles (men without the law) to be crucified and put to death (v. 23). However, God raised Him up from among the dead, having loosed the pains of death. It was not possible for death to hold Him a prisoner because:

1. The character of God demanded His resurrection. He had died, the Sinless for the sinful. God must raise Him as proof of His complete satisfaction with the redemptive work of Christ.
2. The prophecies of the OT demanded His resurrection. This is the particular point which Peter presses in the following verses. – Believers Bible Commentary

**Act 2:25-27** *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, N. WILL YOU ALLOW YOUR HOLY ONE TO SEE CORRUPTION.*

In Psalm 16 David had written prophetically concerning the Lord's life, death, resurrection, and glorification.

As to His life, David described the unbounded confidence and assurance of One who lived in uninterrupted fellowship with His Father. Heart, tongue, and flesh—His whole being was filled with joy and hope.

As to His death, David foresaw that God would not leave His soul in Hades, nor would He allow His Holy One to see corruption. In other words, the soul of the Lord Jesus would not be left in the disembodied state, neither would His body be permitted to disintegrate. (This verse should not be used to prove that the Lord Jesus went to some prison house of departed spirits in the lowest parts of the earth at the time of His death. His soul went to heaven —Luk\_23:43 —and His body was placed in the tomb.) – Believers Bible Commentary

**Act 2:28** *YOU HAVE MADE KNOWN TO ME THE WAYS OF LIFE; YOU WILL MAKE ME FULL OF JOY IN YOUR PRESENCE.'*

As to the resurrection of the Lord, David expressed confidence that God would show Him the path of life. In Psa\_16:11 a, David wrote, "You will show me the path of life." In Act\_2:28 a Peter quoted it, You have made known to me the ways of life. Peter changed the future tense to the past tense. The Holy Spirit obviously directed him to do this since the resurrection was now past.

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The present glorification of the Savior was predicted by David in the words, you will make me full of joy in Your presence, or as Psa\_16:11 puts it, "In Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore."- Believers Bible Commentary

***Act 2:29 "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.***

Apparently, Peter was standing in the temple area. He could point his finger to the sepulcher of David. I stood in that temple area, and I could point my finger up to the top of Mount Zion where David is buried. He is saying, "It is obvious that David wasn't speaking about himself because his bones are right up there on the top of the hill. His grave is there; his body did undergo corruption. He is not speaking of himself but of Someone whom you and I know, someone who did not see corruption but was raised from the dead." - McGee

***Act 2:30-31 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.***

When he wrote the Psalm, David was speaking as a prophet. He remembered that God had promised to raise up One of his descendants to sit on his throne forever. David realized that this One would be the Messiah, and that though He would die, His soul would not be left in the disembodied condition, and His body would not decay. - Believers Bible Commentary

***Act 2:32-33 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.***

Now Peter repeats an announcement that must have shocked his Jewish audience. The Messiah of whom David prophesied was Jesus of Nazareth. God had raised Him from among the dead, as the apostles could all testify because they were eyewitnesses to His resurrection. Following His resurrection, the Lord Jesus was exalted to the right hand of God, and now the Holy Spirit had been sent as promised by the Father. This was the explanation of what had happened in Jerusalem earlier in the day. – Believers Bible Commentary

Now Peter is saying to the crowd there that day, "This that you have seen—that is, the miracle of hearing their own languages spoken by Galileans—has taken place because Jesus was raised from the dead." – McGee

**Is it any wonder that the first sermon after the Holy Spirit is an Easter sermon on the Resurrection?**

Act 2:34-35 "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." ' "

Old Testament saints didn't go to heaven. If any of them had been up in heaven, David would have been there. David did not ascend into heaven. You see, the Old Testament saints are going to be raised to live down on this earth someday. It is the church that will be taken to the New Jerusalem. It is said of the believers today when they die that they are absent from the body and present with the Lord (2Co\_5:8).

Now he quotes Psa\_110:1. He is showing them that Jesus is up yonder at the right hand of God. He will be there until He comes back to establish His Kingdom. But while He is at the right hand of God, He is still working in the world. - McGee

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**Act 2:36-37** *"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." 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?"*

Now, once again, the announcement comes crashing down upon the Jewish people. GOD HAS MADE BOTH LORD AND CHRIST—THIS JESUS WHOM YOU CRUCIFIED (Greek word order). As Bengel said, "The sting of the speech is put at the end"—THIS JESUS, whom you crucified. They had crucified God's Anointed One, and the coming of the Holy Spirit was evidence that Jesus had been exalted in heaven (see Joh\_7:39).

So mighty was the convicting power of the Holy Spirit that there was an immediate response from the audience. Without any invitation or appeal from Peter, they cried out, "What shall we do?" The question was prompted by a deep sense of guilt. They now realized that the Jesus whom they had slain was God's beloved Son! This Jesus had been raised from the dead and was now exalted in heaven. This being so, how could these guilty murderers possibly escape judgment?

**Notice: Peters method led by the Holy Spirit is point out their need for a savior. Can anyone really accept Christ without understanding the position in sin and the hopelessness without Jesus?**

**Act 2:38** *Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*

Peter's answer was that they should repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. First, they were to repent, acknowledging their guilt, and taking sides with God against themselves.

Then they were to be baptized for (or unto) the remission of their sins. At first glance, this verse seems to teach salvation by baptism, and many people insist that this is precisely what it does mean. Such an interpretation is impossible for the following reasons:

1. In dozens of NT passages, salvation is said to be by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Joh\_1:12; Joh\_3:16, Joh\_3:36; Joh\_6:47; Act\_16:31; Rom\_10:9, for example). No verse or two could conceivably contradict such overwhelming testimony.
2. The thief on the cross had the assurance of salvation apart from baptism (Luk\_23:43).
3. The Savior is not stated to have baptized anyone, a strange omission if baptism is essential to salvation.
4. The Apostle Paul was thankful that he baptized only a few of the Corinthians—a strange cause for thankfulness if baptism has saving merit (1Co\_1:14-16).

It is important to notice that only Jews were ever told to be baptized for the forgiveness of sins (see Act\_22:16). In this fact, we believe, is the secret to the understanding of this passage. The nation of Israel had crucified the Lord of glory. The Jewish people had cried out, "His blood be on us and on our children" (Mat\_27:25). The guilt of the Messiah's death was thus claimed by the people of Israel.

Now, some of these Jews had come to realize their mistake. By repentance they acknowledged their sin to God. By trusting the Lord Jesus as their Savior, they were regenerated and received eternal forgiveness of sins. By public water baptism they dissociated themselves from the nation that crucified the Lord and identified themselves with Him. Baptism thus became the outward sign that their sin in connection with the rejection of Christ (as well as all their sins) had been washed away. It took them off Jewish ground and placed them on Christian ground. But baptism did not save them. Only faith in Christ could do that. To teach otherwise is to teach another gospel and thus be accursed (Gal\_1:8-9).

An alternative interpretation of baptism for the remission of sins is given by Ryrie:

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This does not mean in order that sins might be remitted, for everywhere in the New Testament sins are forgiven as a result of faith in Christ, not as a result of baptism. It means be baptized because of the remission of sins. The Greek preposition eis, for, has this meaning "because of" not only here but also in such a passage as Mat\_12:41 where the meaning can only be "they repented because of [not in order to] the preaching of Jonah." Repentance brought the remission of sins for this Pentecostal crowd, and because of the remission of sins they were asked to be baptized.

Peter assured them that if they repented and were baptized, they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. To insist that this order applies to us today is to misunderstand God's administrative dealings in the early days of the church. As H. P. Barker has so ably pointed out in *The Vicar of Christ*, there are four communities of believers in the Book of Acts, and the order of events in connection with the reception of the Holy Spirit is different in each case.

Here in Act\_2:38 we read about Jewish Christians. For them, the order was:

1. Repentance.
2. Water baptism.
3. Reception of the Holy Spirit.

The conversion of Samaritans is recorded in Act\_8:14-17. There we read that the following events occurred:

1. They believed.
2. They were baptized in water.
3. The apostles prayed for them.
4. The apostles laid their hands on them.
5. They received the Holy Spirit.

In Act\_10:44-48 the conversion of Gentiles is in view. Notice the order here:

1. Faith.
2. Reception of the Holy Spirit.
3. Water baptism.

A final community of believers is made up of disciples of John the Baptist, Act\_19:1-7:

1. They believed.
2. They were rebaptized.
3. The Apostle Paul laid his hands on them.
4. They received the Holy Spirit.

Does this mean there were four ways of salvation in the Book of Acts? Of course not. Salvation was, is, and always will be on the basis of faith in the Lord. But during the transition period recorded in Acts, God chose to vary the events connected with the reception of the Holy Spirit for reasons which He knew but did not choose to reveal to us.

Then which of these patterns applies to us today? Since Israel nationally has rejected the Messiah, the Jewish people have forfeited any special privileges they might have had. Today God is calling out of the Gentiles a people for His Name (Act\_15:14). Therefore, the order for today is that which is found in Acts 10:

Faith.

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Reception of the Holy Spirit.

Water baptism.

We believe this order applies to all today, to Jews as well as to Gentiles. This may sound arbitrary at first. It might be asked, "When did the order in Act\_2:38 cease to apply to Jews and the order in Act\_10:44-48 begin?" No definite date can be given, of course. But the Book of Acts traces a gradual transition from the gospel's going out primarily to Jews, to its being repeatedly rejected by the Jews, to its going out to the Gentiles. By the end of the Book of Acts the nation of Israel had been largely set aside. By unbelief it had forfeited any special claim as God's chosen people. During the Church Age it would be reckoned with the Gentile nations, and God's order for the Gentiles, outlined in Act\_10:44-48, would apply. – Believers Bible Commentary

***Act 2:39 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."***

Peter next reminds them that the promise of the Holy Spirit is to them and to their children (the Jewish people) and to all who are afar off (the Gentiles), even as many as ... God would call. The very people who had said, "His blood be on us and on our children," are now assured of grace for themselves and their children if they will trust the Lord.

This verse has often been used mistakenly to teach that children of believing parents are thereby assured of covenant privileges, or that they are saved. Spurgeon answers this effectively:

Will not the Church of God know that "that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit?" "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" The natural birth communicates nature's filthiness, but it cannot convey peace. Under the new covenant, we are expressly told that the sons of God are "born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

The important thing to notice is that the promise is not only to you and to your children but to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call. It is as inclusive as the "whosoever" of the gospel invitation. - Believers Bible Commentary

***Act 2:40 And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation."*** In other words, "Get away from this religion. Turn to Christ." – McGee

**When you are asked what religion, you are, how do you respond?**

***Act 2:41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.***

This is not some preacher's count. These were genuinely born-again believers. Here is one place where the figure on the number of converts is absolutely accurate. – McGee

There was a great forward surge of people, desiring to be baptized as outward evidence that they had gladly received Peter's word as the word of the Lord.

There were added to the company of believers that day about three thousand souls. If the best proof of a Holy Spirit ministry is the conversion of souls, then surely Peter's was that kind of ministry. Doubtless this Galilean fisherman was reminded of the words of the Lord Jesus, "I will make you fishers of men" (Mat\_4:19). And perhaps of the Savior's saying, "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father" (Joh\_14:12).

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It is instructive to notice the care with which the number of converts is recorded—about three thousand souls. All servants of the Lord might exercise similar caution in tabulating so-called decisions for Christ. – Believers Bible Commentary

### *The Fellowship of the Believers*

**Act 2:42** *And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.*

The proof of reality is in continuance. These converts proved the reality of their profession by continuing steadfastly in:

1. The apostles' doctrine. This means the inspired teachings of the apostles, delivered orally at first, and now preserved in the NT.
2. Fellowship. Another evidence of new life was the desire of the new believers to be with the people of God and share things in common with them. There was a sense of being separated to God from the world, and a community of interests with other Christians.
3. The breaking of bread. This expression is used in the NT to refer both to the Lord's Supper and to eating a common meal. The meaning in any particular case must be determined by the sense of the passage. Here it obviously refers to the Lord's Supper, since it would be quite unnecessary to say that they continued steadfastly eating their meals. From Act\_20:7 we learn that the practice of the early Christians was to break bread on the first day of the week. During the early days of the church, a love feast was held in connection with the Lord's Supper as an expression of the love of the saints for one another. However, abuses crept in, and the "agape" or love feast was discontinued.
4. Prayers. This was the fourth principal practice of the early church, and expressed complete dependence on the Lord for worship, guidance, preservation, and service. – Believers Bible Commentary

I have a little booklet called the Spiritual Fingerprints of the Visible Church. How can you identify a real church? Notice the four marks of identification. First, they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine. The mark of a church is not the height of the steeple nor the sound of the bell. It is not whether the pulpit is stationed in the middle or the chancel is divided. The important issue is whether or not they hold to the apostles' doctrine. Correct doctrine was one of the fingerprints of the visible church. Secondly, fellowship. They were sharing the things of Christ. The third, breaking bread. Breaking of bread is more than just going through the ritual of the Lord's Supper. It means being brought into a fellowship and a relationship with Christ. Fourth, prayers. I'm afraid in the average church today it is a little fingerprint. That is, prayer is the evident weakness of the church. Actually, the greatest asset of any church is prayer. - McGee

**Act 2:43** *Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.*

A sense of reverential awe came over the people. The mighty power of the Holy Spirit was so evident that hearts were hushed and subdued. Astonishment filled their souls as they saw the apostles performing many wonders and signs. Wonders were miracles which excited wonder and amazement. Signs were miracles designed to convey instruction. A miracle could be both a wonder and a sign. – Believers Bible Commentary

**Act 2:44-47** *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. 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.*

Never has the church been as spiritually strong as it was at that time. This type of living would never work today because we have too many carnal Christians. And, notice, it was the Lord who did the adding to the church.