

## ***FPFWC Christian Development***



### **God Offers Praise**

September 2021

Fall Quarter

September 26, 2021

#### Lesson #4 – Praise For Salvation

SCRIPTURE TEXT –Acts 2:32-33, 37-47

**Key Verse - They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.—Acts 2:42**

#### ICE BREAKERS –

1. *How can you challenge others to follow Christ?*

#### LESSON BACKGROUND

The Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts were both written by Luke, a Gentile disciple and physician (Colossians 4:14). The Gospel is like a Part 1, while Acts is Part 2. Luke addressed both of his books to a certain Theophilus (Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1). Acts 1:8 anticipated the spread of the gospel message from Jerusalem to Samaria and on to the remotest parts of the earth. The contents of the book of Acts span about 30 years, beginning in AD 30. The time frame of our lesson is 50 days after Jesus' resurrection.

The apostle Peter was the one speaking in today's text (see Acts 2:14). There's a very good chance that many or most of his audience had been in the city during Jesus' trials, crucifixion, and resurrection; it was natural for those making the annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem for observances of Passover and the feast of unleavened bread (Leviticus 23:5–6; Luke 22:1) to stay for the feast of weeks (Deuteronomy 16:9–12). The latter came to be known as Pentecost.

The people who heard Peter preach were from various locations (Acts 2:8–11). Imagine the nonstop talking in the streets about the events surrounding the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth! There would have been rumors, questions, and doubts about the identity of Jesus. *Did He really rise from the dead? Was He really the Christ?*

At first glance, we may be surprised that Peter exhibited the boldness we see in today's text. After all, he had denied Jesus three times before the crucifixion (Luke 22:54–62) and had cowered afterward in a locked room (John 20:19). But having been reinstated by Jesus himself after the resurrection (21:15–19), Peter became a different man.

#### LESSON COMMENTARY –

The passage must refer to someone other than David because he is buried in Jerusalem. Peter called David a prophet because he confidently predicted God would fulfill His promise that one of his descendants would rise from the dead and also rule forever (Ps 132:11–12; cf. 2Sm 7:12–13). In addition to Scriptural evidence for the resurrection, Peter gave personal evidence. **We are all witnesses**, he said. In 2:31, Peter reiterated themes from 2:27, but in v. 31; Ps 16:10a is now applied to Jesus in His resurrection rather than to David's

confidence in the “Holy One” for his own resurrection. But if David’s hope of resurrection was founded upon the resurrection of the Holy One, then what can be said of David’s future resurrection can be applied to the Holy One Himself.

### (3) His Exaltation (2:33–36)

**2:33–36.** The exaltation proved Jesus is the Messiah.

**2:33.** The authority for Jesus to send the promised Holy Spirit derived from the exaltation. Christ always possessed the rights of divine authority, but in His exaltation He received the right to exercise the power and authority of His deity.

### The Reaction of the Crowd (2:37)

**2:37.** It is not surprising that Peter’s audience experienced emotional trauma. The expression **pierced to the heart** is used figuratively for the feeling of sharp pain due to anxiety or remorse (BDAG, 415). They were not merely intellectually convinced, but spiritually convicted of their dilemma.

### d. The Appeal of Peter (2:38–40)

**2:38.** Peter’s answer to the anguished question of his countrymen is good news, yet raises some controversial issues about the relation of repentance, forgiveness, and baptism. The Jews were familiar with John’s message emphasizing repentance and baptism (see the comments on Mt 3:5–12). On the imperative verb **repent**, Louw and Nida write, “Though in English a focal component of repent is the sorrow or contrition that a person experiences because of sin, the emphasis [in the Gk. words “to repent” and “repentance”] seems to be more specifically the total change, both in thought and behavior, with respect to how one should both think and act. Whether the focus is upon attitude or behavior varies somewhat in different contexts” (L&N, 509). Peter was calling the hearers to change their minds about their participation in and approval of the crucifixion of Jesus. Darrell Bock notes that repentance and faith are two sides of the same coin. One cannot turn to Christ in faith for forgiveness without also turning away from reliance upon something else. He proposes, however, that there is a distinction between faith and repentance: “Repentance stresses the starting point of the need for forgiveness, whereas faith is the resulting trust and understanding that this forgiveness comes from God, the one turned to for the gift (Acts 20:21)” (*Acts*, BECNT [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2007], 142). Peter introduced two new elements. First, he said baptism must now be **in the name of Jesus**. This means a commitment to and identification with Jesus as Lord and Christ. For an explanation for why the name of the triune God is not used in the baptismal formula here, see the comments on Mt 28:18–20. Second, he promised them the **gift of the Holy Spirit**. This is the Spirit Himself, as in 2:33 (“the promise of the Holy Spirit” is the Spirit Himself), and not the “gifts” that the Spirit gives to believers.

Some believe that both repentance and baptism are required for the forgiveness of sins (baptismal regeneration). This view, however, is inconsistent with the overall teaching of Scripture. In addition, in Lk 24:47; Ac 3:19; 10:43;

13:38, and 26:18, **forgiveness** (*aphesis*, the same Gk. word translated with “forgiveness” in each verse) is promised *without baptism* to those who respond appropriately (i.e., with faith or repentance). The grammatical construction of the sentence does not support the idea that baptism is essential for salvation. The command to **repent** is plural (“all of you repent”) as is the word **your** in **for the forgiveness of your sins**, forging a close connection between repentance and forgiveness. On the other hand, the command **be baptized** is a third person *singular* verb, implying that baptism is not directly connected to forgiveness. As in 10:47–48 and 16:33, baptism is the appropriate response for those who have found salvation in Christ, but it is not the *means* effecting that salvation.

Others believe in a second work of the Spirit after conversion, usually signified by speaking in tongues. The context, however, suggests the reception of the Spirit is a one-time experience. No mention is made about the 3,000 who believed speaking in tongues (though admittedly this is an argument from silence—but sometimes the silence is *deafening*), nor is the laying on of hands mentioned as the means for conveying the Spirit as a gift to others, nor for enabling others to speak in tongues.

Clearly, the apostles were believers prior to their reception of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Nevertheless, this does not teach that all believers must receive the Holy Spirit subsequent to their salvation experience. Rather, the described events demonstrate the transition from the way the Holy Spirit worked in the OT, to the Spirit’s work in the NT church. In the OT, the Holy Spirit came upon some believers to empower them for a limited time to accomplish a specific task. In the NT, the Holy Spirit permanently indwells all believers (Jn 14:16–17). The falling of the Holy Spirit on the apostles marked the transition to the new way the Holy Spirit would work.

The three elements of the conversion experience are repentance (implying also faith), baptism, and the gift of the Spirit. If a person will turn from sin in faith and repentance (essential and internal) and be baptized (nonessential and external), God will forgive his sin and he will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

**2:39.** The expression **for all who are far off** could refer to either Jews of the Diaspora or Gentiles. The former seems more likely in view of Peter’s restricted understanding of God’s redemptive program prior to the vision leading him to Cornelius. But, at the time of writing, Luke may have understood it as a prediction of the proclamation of the gospel to the Gentiles without limitation to any ethnic group.

The statement, **as many as the Lord our God will call to himself**, refers to God’s electing purposes, whereby people are drawn to Christ for salvation. In his prophecy, Joel promised salvation to “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord” (Ac 2:21); Peter was indicating that God is sovereign over the call to salvation.

**2:40.** The recorded message is only a summary of what Peter said. Peter’s primary concern was the imminent judgment of the day of the Lord. If Peter’s listeners wanted to escape destruction of that **perverse generation** they had to acknowledge Jesus as Lord and Christ (Messiah). The description of his present

generation as **perverse** means that they were morally and ethically corrupt (see BDAG, 930).<sup>1</sup>

### e. The Salvation and Fellowship of Three Thousand (2:41–47)

**2:41.** The response was amazing. Three thousand believed and were baptized. Those who believed did not start a new sect but were added to the 120. The growth from 120 to 3,000 was nothing less than supernatural. Baptism was not a foreign concept for Jewish people. By the first century, the prescribed ritual washings in the law (Lv 8:6; 15:31–33) had led to an elaborate system of ritual baths for Jewish people. Thus, John the Baptist's baptism of repentance was understood and accepted by the many Jewish people who went out to the wilderness to hear John preach (Mt 4:25). Peter's command for them to repent and be baptized would have been understood as an outward sign of their repentance from sin and commencement of following Jesus.

In 2:41–42, Luke gave a concise, vivid description of community life in the first followers of Jesus. These first believers rightly saw themselves as the faithful remnant of Israel. Unbeknownst to them at this point, they were also part of something entirely new—a supernatural community bonded together by their common faith in Jesus Christ, their unselfish love for one another, and their determination to proclaim the gospel. It would take the ministry of the apostles (Eph 3:5a), Paul (Eph 3:5b–6) and the Jerusalem Council (Ac 15) to reveal that this was the beginning of the universal church, the one new man composed of Jews and Gentiles (cf. Eph 2:11–22; 3:1–13 and comments there).

**2:42. Devoting** (*proskartereo*) means “exerting great effort to persist in doing something.” It indicates action that is continuous and habitual. Luke uses the term in 1:14 to describe the “devotion” of the 120 to prayer and in 6:4 to refer to the apostles' devotion to prayer and ministry of the word. What were the early believers devoted to? What were their priorities?

The **apostles' teaching** identifies material that the church considered authoritative because it was taught by the apostles. The content undoubtedly focused on the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, especially the redemptive aspects of His life, death, and resurrection.

**Fellowship** (*koinonia*) refers to intimate, not casual, community spirit. Christian fellowship includes a relationship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and a horizontal relationship with other believers. The latter was Luke's focus here in Ac 2. The definite article suggests that the first believers formed a distinct and identifiable group. Their fellowship included two activities.

**Breaking of bread** was more than a meal to satisfy the pangs of hunger. It was an occasion for intimate fellowship. It probably included both the Lord's Supper and a common meal (2:46; 20:7; 1Co 10:16). At the meal they celebrated their communion with one another. At the Lord's Table they celebrated their communion with the risen Christ.

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<sup>1</sup> Marty, W. H. (2014). [Acts](#). In M. A. Rydelnik & M. Vanlaningham (Eds.), *The moody bible commentary* (pp. 1676–1677). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

**Prayer** is plural and suggests corporate prayer. The early church realized their need for God's ongoing help and the importance of praise and devoted themselves to prayer.

**2:43. Wonders and signs** gave evidence God was at work in the church. While miracles in Acts did provide deliverance for those who were sick, equally important was their confirmation of the gospel message given through the apostles and the other members of Christ's body (14:3). For the most part, signs and wonders took place through the hands of the apostles (2:43; 3:16; 5:12; 15:12; 19:11–12), a fitting fact since the NT identifies performing signs and wonders as authentication of true apostle (2Co 12:12; Heb 2:3–4). The only exceptions in Acts are Stephen (6:8) and Philip (8:6), who, having had the apostles lay hands on them (6:5–6), functioned as apostolic legates (or representatives) and thereby performed signs and wonders.

**2:44–45.** Their spiritual unity was manifested in voluntary, compassionate sharing. This was not socialism or communism. The purpose was to meet needs and not redistribute wealth.

**2:46.** The early believers considered themselves part of the faithful remnant in Israel, so they continued to worship in the temple. They also met in individual homes in a more informal setting.

**2:47.** At this point the church was not threatened by persecution or disrupted by internal problems. Internally there was a spirit of rejoicing and generosity. Externally they enjoyed popularity and respect from the people. **And the Lord was adding to their number.** Their growth was supernatural and rapid. Christ had promised, "I will build my church ..." (Mt 16:18), and He kept His promise. Luke concluded his description of the founding of the church on a note of triumph.<sup>2</sup>

**LESSON NUGGET** – The Spirit filled the believers and empowered them for witness. He gave Peter insight into the Word and the ability to show men Christ in the Word. The Spirit used the witness of the church to convict the lost, just as Jesus said He would do. (16:7-10)

**Sources: *Moody Bible Commentary, Standard Lesson Commentary, The Essential Everyday Bible Commentary, The Jeremiah Study Bible and Wiersbe Expository Outlines on the New Testament***

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<sup>2</sup> Marty, W. H. (2014). [Acts](#). In M. A. Rydelnik & M. Vanlaningham (Eds.), *The moody bible commentary* (p. 1678). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.