



# Acts of the Apostles - Lesson 2B

## Chapter 2:12-41

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- We return tonight to a critical moment in the Book of Acts
  - The Spirit has arrived and with Him came unique demonstrations of His power among the crowd
    - Last week we noticed that these manifestations led to two different responses from the crowd that observed the event
    - We'll return to examining the two responses and then move to the second half of the chapter
      - But first we need to retrace our steps through a very important issue arising from the text here
      - That is, why does the arrival of the Spirit occur long after these men became believers (especially in light of the fact that this is no longer God's pattern)
  - Last week I taught that the answer is that God is seeking to distinguish this day in our memories
    - This is the day that the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost is fulfilled
      - As such, it's important that believers throughout history understand plainly that on this day God instituted a unique ministry of His Spirit
      - Beginning on this day, all believers would receive a personal indwelling of the Spirit, which we call the baptism of the Holy Spirit or the Baptism of Fire
    - Since this marks such a dramatic departure from God's previous working among men, it warranted a unique and unrepeatable display of God's power to set it apart
      - Instead of indwelling these believers on the day they believed, the Father waited to send His Spirit until this special day
      - For that reason, these men received the Spirit after they had believed so as to mark the day
        - But after this day, believers receive the Baptism of the Spirit when they believe
  - However, there are two exceptions in the book of Acts in which this delayed indwelling of the Spirit takes place
    - We will study these in detail as we reach them...one occurs in Acts 8 when the Samaritans receive the Gospel
    - And the other happens in Acts 10 when the Gentiles first receive the Gospel
  - For now I want to remind you of something I taught on the first night
    - The story of Acts is a story of the outward movement of the Gospel from Jerusalem to Rome
    - And it's the story of how God's grace moves outward from Jews first, then to Samaritans and finally to Gentiles
  - As the Gospel reaches each of these audiences, there is yet another opportunity for God to make clear the arrival of a new ministry for the Spirit
    - So in Acts 2 we see God bringing the indwelling of the Spirit to Jews

- And in this way, Scripture confirms that salvation is from the Jews and they will receive God's promises first
  - They are the ones who experience the fulfillment of the Jewish Feast of Weeks
- But then when God opens the door for Samaritans and later Gentiles, He will redisplay these manifestations for their benefit
- But after the third group sees the sign, this unique delayed indwelling of the Spirit comes to an end
  - And the associated physical manifestations of the indwelling, having met their purpose, also quickly begin to diminish
- Returning to the reactions of the crowd, remember what we saw last week

**Acts 2:12** And they all continued in amazement and great perplexity, saying to one another, "What does this mean?"

**Acts 2:13** But others were mocking and saying, "They are full of sweet wine."

- The group of visiting Jews recognize the miracle but can't understand what they see
  - A second group of local Jews dismiss the entire event as merely drunk men
    - They do not perceive the event as supernatural in origin, and therefore it triggers no questions
  - Both these groups are unbelievers who are seeing this manifestation of God, with some responding with an open heart and others responding by mocking
    - Paul explained how God used this unique display

**1Cor. 14:20** Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature.

**1Cor. 14:21** In the Law it is written, "BY MEN OF STRANGE TONGUES AND BY THE LIPS OF STRANGERS I WILL SPEAK TO THIS PEOPLE, AND EVEN SO THEY WILL NOT LISTEN TO ME," says the Lord.

**1Cor. 14:22** So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophecy is for a sign, not to unbelievers but to those who believe.

- Quoting from Isaiah 28:11, Paul says this gift was given to fulfill prophecy given to Israel
  - God told Israel they would know when God was judging them when they saw Him opening the mouths of Gentiles to speak in foreign tongues
  - Here we see the beginning of that prophecy, when unbelievers respond to a sign by questioning it and looking for answers
    - Notice that Paul says that the sign was not for believers as a means of edifying or building up faith
      - It was a sign to unbelievers
    - And yet it's clear that this sign was never intended to save man by itself

- It was intended to cause questioning
- Isaiah says that the sign will not transform the Jewish nation into believers
- In order for this sign to become the means for salvation, it must be united with understanding concerning the meaning of the sign
  - And so it falls to Peter to preach a sermon to the crowd which offers an explanation for the events they've witnessed

**Acts 2:14** But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: “Men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give heed to my words.

**Acts 2:15** “For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only the third hour of the day;

**Acts 2:16** but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel:

**Acts 2:17** ‘AND IT SHALL BE IN THE LAST DAYS,’ God says,  
 ‘THAT I WILL POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT ON ALL MANKIND;  
 AND YOUR SONS AND YOUR DAUGHTERS SHALL PROPHECY,  
 AND YOUR YOUNG MEN SHALL SEE VISIONS,  
 AND YOUR OLD MEN SHALL DREAM DREAMS;

**Acts 2:18** EVEN ON MY BONDSLAVES, BOTH MEN AND WOMEN,  
 I WILL IN THOSE DAYS POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT  
 And they shall prophesy.

**Acts 2:19** ‘AND I WILL GRANT WONDERS IN THE SKY ABOVE  
 AND SIGNS ON THE EARTH BELOW,  
 BLOOD, AND FIRE, AND VAPOR OF SMOKE.

**Acts 2:20** ‘THE SUN WILL BE TURNED INTO DARKNESS  
 AND THE MOON INTO BLOOD,  
 BEFORE THE GREAT AND GLORIOUS DAY OF THE LORD SHALL COME.

**Acts 2:21** ‘AND IT SHALL BE THAT EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.’

- Peter hears the snide comments from the local Jews of the city, so he stands with the eleven and raises his voice so that everyone in the crowd can hear him
  - And then he delivers a sermon
    - Beginning with a reading of Scripture, from memory in this case
  - Before we examine what Peter says in this chapter, let's consider the pattern that Scripture is presenting here
    - Because this is one instance where a useful pattern is present, and we should take note of it and follow it
  - First, we have already noted that the situation began with a supernatural display of God's power
    - Specifically, a work of the Spirit brought about the opportunity for Peter to preach and deliver this message

- Similarly, if we are to reach the world with the Gospel, our work must always begin with a work of the Spirit among the people
  - It won't always be such a vivid display
  - Nor will it necessarily grab the attention of so many people at one moment
- Nevertheless, if our message will reach anyone, it must come by the power of the Holy Spirit

**John 6:44** “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.

- Here the drawing ministry of the Spirit is evident in the way the visiting Jews in the crowd respond to the miracle by asking its meaning
  - Similarly, our work today in presenting the Gospel depends on the Holy Spirit to prepare hearts and draw men to Christ
  - But just as in this case, that drawing work is only half the equation
  - The second part of the process is found in a message that brings the Word of God
  - Paul describes this two-part process succinctly in Romans:

**Rom. 10:17** So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

- Faith comes from hearing the message of the Gospel, as delivered by the Word of God
  - And Peter opens his sermon with a presentation of God's word, and in particular a passage that says something about the circumstances
  - We're witnessing the Biblical way preaching should be done
    - A reading of God's word
    - Accompanied by exposition of its meaning
    - Followed by an application and call to believe based on its meaning
  - The power of such preaching isn't found in the persuasiveness of the speaker's words
    - But rather in the power of God's Spirit and His word
- Turning to Peter's sermon itself, Peter defends the men
  - He makes clear they aren't drunk as some suppose, since it's only about 9:00 in the morning
  - Rather, Peter says their behavior is consistent with what Joel wrote concerning the last days
    - Peter quotes from Joel 2, and yet look carefully at what Joel says
      - He begins describing a pouring out of the Spirit on men
      - And as a result of the outpouring of the Spirit, your sons and daughters will prophesy
        - See visions, dream dreams

- And accompanying this moment, there will be miraculous signs in the sky
  - And it will all take place before the great and glorious return of Christ
- Looking at those details, we immediately notice that none of those things have happened in this moment
  - Furthermore, the things that have taken place at Pentecost like speaking in tongues and the wind and fire are NOT mentioned in Joel's prophecy
  - So though Peter read from Joel, this passage is clearly talking about a different moment than the one that took place in the upper room
- In fact, the moment Joel is describing is the same moment described in Zechariah 12 immediately before the Lord returns to reign
  - This is the prophecy of how the nation of Israel will receive the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the end of Tribulation and receive the Lord
  - We studied this moment as you remember in Isaiah
- So why does Peter read from Joel in this moment?
  - Peter is referencing Joel to make the point about how God uses His Spirit to create manifestations
    - When the Holy Spirit is poured out on Israel in the last days of Tribulation, those men and women will act in ways similar to the way the disciples are acting here
      - They will be filled by the Spirit and say and do things that will appear strange
    - So here, Peter is making an application of Joel, not an interpretation
      - Peter is saying that this scene should be understood to be a work of the Spirit because of what Joel said to expect in the last days
      - Simply put...these witnesses should understand this strange behavior as a work of God by His Spirit and not as human weakness
- So having read God's word, now Peter turns to applying it for the sake of his audience
  - This is where the "preaching" begins
    - But notice that like all good Biblical preaching, the sermon hinges on the meaning of Biblical text and not on human wisdom, funny stories, etc.
  - The turning point of the sermon comes with the final verse of Joel
    - Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord in response to God's Spirit will be saved
      - The only question left to address is who is this Lord?

**Acts 2:22** "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know —

**Acts 2:23** this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.

**Acts 2:24** "But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death,

since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.

**Acts 2:25** “For David says of Him,

‘I SAW THE LORD ALWAYS IN MY PRESENCE;

FOR HE IS AT MY RIGHT HAND, SO THAT I WILL NOT BE SHAKEN.

**Acts 2:26** ‘THEREFORE MY HEART WAS GLAD AND MY TONGUE EXULTED;

MOREOVER MY FLESH ALSO WILL LIVE IN HOPE;

**Acts 2:27** BECAUSE YOU WILL NOT ABANDON MY SOUL TO HADES,

NOR ALLOW YOUR HOLY ONE TO UNDERGO DECAY.

**Acts 2:28** ‘YOU HAVE MADE KNOWN TO ME THE WAYS OF LIFE;

YOU WILL MAKE ME FULL OF GLADNESS WITH YOUR PRESENCE.’

**Acts 2:29** “Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.

**Acts 2:30** “And so, because he was a prophet and knew that GOD HAD SWORN TO HIM WITH AN OATH TO SEAT one OF HIS DESCENDANTS ON HIS THRONE,

**Acts 2:31** he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that HE WAS NEITHER ABANDONED TO HADES, NOR DID His flesh SUFFER DECAY.

**Acts 2:32** “This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses.

**Acts 2:33** “Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear.

**Acts 2:34** “For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: ‘THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD,

“SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND,

**Acts 2:35** UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET.’”

- Peter begins in addressing the crowd as the “men of Israel”
  - At this point, Peter is preaching to Jews alone
    - And this is how it should be
    - The Jew was to receive the Gospel first
    - Only later does God open the ears of Samaritans and Gentiles
  - Until God brings Peter to understand that the Gospel will reach the entire world, He is logically focused on Jews
- Peter then begins to name the Messiah who is responsible for stirring up this crowd
  - Jesus of Nazareth, Who proved His claims with signs and miracles that God performed through Him by the Spirit
    - And these men remember all these things
    - It was only 50 days earlier
  - But the question on their minds would have been how the Messiah could have been put to death?
    - Peter anticipates this question and answers it
  - The man was delivered over to death by God Himself
    - And this was a predetermined plan by God’s foreknowledge

- Predetermined means “determined by God’s fixed purpose”
- And foreknowledge means to “know beforehand” in the sense of pre-planned
- So God brought Jesus to death because it was a pre-planned event in keeping with God’s fixed purpose
- And yet Peter makes clear that God worked through the agency of sinful, godless men in accomplishing this outcome
  - Since God is not the author of sin, He relies on sinful men to act on their sinful impulses and He directs them to His intended end
- In the end, God brought Jesus back from the dead, because it was impossible for death to hold Christ
  - Death is reserved for those who are guilty of sin and deserve death
    - Since Jesus was sinless, He couldn’t be held in death forever
    - He remained there long enough to accomplish God’s purpose and then He was resurrected
- Then Peter quotes from several different Psalms written by David to prove his point concerning Jesus as Messiah
  - First David said in the Psalms concerning the Messiah that He is always seated at the right hand of the Father
    - And the Messiah’s flesh will live in hope because His soul will not be left in Hades nor will the body undergo decay
    - Instead the Messiah will know the way of life
  - Traditionally, Jewish rabbis interpreted these verses to be a description of David himself
    - But Peter corrects that view and opened by saying that David spoke these statements about the Messiah, not himself
    - And Peter then makes the obvious observation that David didn’t resurrect, at least not yet
      - He was still buried in a grave nearby in Jerusalem
    - So these words couldn’t have been referring to David
      - They were describing someone who is resurrected from death and brought to eternal life without suffering decay in the meantime
      - Only Jesus fits that description
  - Then Peter goes on to say that David knew he was promised to have a descendent on his throne forever
    - And the fulfillment of that promise is met in a resurrected Lord who can live forever and sit on that throne without ever suffering death again
  - Finally, Peter says that this Jesus having ascended is the One Who sent the Holy Spirit as promised to His sons, thus resulting in this strange display
    - Peter testifies in v.32 that they witnessed this resurrection
    - And it was the fulfillment of David’s prophecy that the Lord would sit at the



right hand of the Father

- Not that David himself was to receive this promise
- Finally, Peter brings his sermon to a climax

**Acts 2:36** “Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ — this Jesus whom you crucified.”

**Acts 2:37** Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?”

**Acts 2:38** Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

**Acts 2:39** “For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.”

**Acts 2:40** And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation!”

**Acts 2:41** So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.

- Having spoken truth backed by the power and authority of God’s word, Peter gives a call for repentance
  - And the work of the Holy Spirit is clearly evident in their hearts
    - They were pierced, which means shocked or stunned
    - They knew this was true, but the news stunned them because it showed them they had previously rejected Christ
      - And now they were understandably concerned for what they could do about this situation
      - So they ask Peter
  - Peter answers and says that forgiveness is available, if they repent and are baptized
    - Then they too can receive the baptism of the Spirit
    - The close connection Peter makes between salvation and baptism is uniquely associated with the Jewish generation of his day
      - Normally, we wouldn’t declare that baptism is a necessary requirement for salvation
      - And it wasn’t a requirement for salvation in Peter’s day either
    - But the generation of Israel that rejected Jesus was under a special judgment that Jesus Himself declared in the Gospels
      - Because the nation of Israel rejected their Messiah, Jesus declared this generation of Jews to be under a penalty
        - They committed the unforgivable sin and were appointed to suffer the judgment of AD 70
        - Virtually the entire nation was executed by the Romans

- If a Jew wanted to avoid that judgment in this generation, they must believe in the Gospel and be baptized so that they were separated from their generation
  - This is the meaning of Peter's comment in v.40
  - They were being called to eternal salvation through faith, and to an earthly salvation from the AD 70 judgment through baptism
- In Acts, every time we see baptism so closely connected to a message of salvation, it's always present to a Jewish audience who were in jeopardy of this specific judgment
  - Today, we wouldn't preach that someone be baptized to be saved
    - Rather, we preach as Paul did that Gentiles should be baptized as an obedient act of faith
- And on this day, 3,000 men received the testimony of God's word as preached through Peter
  - And they did as Peter commanded instantly growing the early church ten fold on its first day