



Peter's Sermon at Pentecost (Acts 2:22-41)

Notes: Week Five

Acts 2:22-41 (NIV)

²² “Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. ²³ This man was handed over to you by God’s deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, ^[a] put him to death by nailing him to the cross. ²⁴ But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. ²⁵ David said about him:

““I saw the Lord always before me.
Because he is at my right hand,
I will not be shaken.

²⁶ Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;
my body also will rest in hope,

²⁷ because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead,
you will not let your holy one see decay.

²⁸ You have made known to me the paths of life;
you will fill me with joy in your presence.”^[b]

²⁹ “Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. ³⁰ But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. ³¹ Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay. ³² God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. ³³ Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. ³⁴ For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said,

““The Lord said to my Lord:

“Sit at my right hand
³⁵ until I make your enemies
a footstool for your feet.””^[c]

³⁶ “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.”

³⁷ When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

³⁸ Peter replied, “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. ³⁹ The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

⁴⁰ With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” ⁴¹ Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

Acts 2:22-41 (HCSB)

²² “Men of Israel, listen to these words: This Jesus the Nazarene was a man pointed out to you by God with miracles, wonders, and signs that God did among you through Him, just as you yourselves know.²³ Though He was delivered up according to God’s determined plan and foreknowledge, you used^[a] lawless people^[b] to nail Him to a cross and kill Him. ²⁴ God raised Him up, ending the pains of death, because it was not possible for Him to be held by it. ²⁵ For David says of Him:

I saw the Lord ever before me;
because He is at my right hand,
I will not be shaken.

²⁶ Therefore my heart was glad,
and my tongue rejoiced.
Moreover, my flesh will rest in hope,
²⁷ because You will not leave me in Hades
or allow Your Holy One to see decay.
²⁸ You have revealed the paths of life to me;
You will fill me with gladness
in Your presence.^[c]

²⁹ “Brothers, I can confidently speak to you about the patriarch David: He is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰ Since he was a prophet, he knew that God had sworn an oath to him to seat one of his descendants^{[d][e]} on his throne. ³¹ Seeing this in advance, he spoke concerning the resurrection of the Messiah:

He^[f] was not left in Hades,
and His flesh did not experience decay.^[g]

³² “God has resurrected this Jesus. We are all witnesses of this. ³³ Therefore, since He has been exalted to the right hand of God and has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit, He has poured out what you both see and hear. ³⁴ For it was not David who ascended into the heavens, but he himself says:

The Lord declared to my Lord,
‘Sit at My right hand
³⁵ until I make Your enemies Your footstool.’^[h]

³⁶ “Therefore let all the house of Israel know with certainty that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah!”

Forgiveness through the Messiah

³⁷ When they heard this, they came under deep conviction^[i] and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles: “Brothers, what must we do?”

³⁸ “Repent,” Peter said to them, “and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is for you and for your children, and for all who are far off,^[j] as many as the Lord our God will call.” ⁴⁰ And with many other words he testified and strongly urged them, saying, “Be saved from this corrupt^[k] generation!”

A Generous and Growing Church

⁴¹ So those who accepted his message were baptized, and that day about 3,000 people were added to them.

Holman Christian Standard Bible - Study Bible¹

Acts 2:22-41

2:23 Peter's declaration articulates a major paradox of the Christian life: Jesus' death occurred as a result of the plan and foreknowledge of God, but it was the free (and sinful) acts of human beings that executed that plan. The Bible often affirms the reality of both divine sovereignty and genuine human choice without explaining how the two can possibly work together without conflict (e.g., [4:28](#); [Gen 45:5](#)).

2:24 The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the fundamental event of Christianity and the basis of the gospel. Peter made several important statements about the resurrection in this verse. First, it was **God** who **raised** Jesus from the dead. This pictures the resurrection as God the Father's vindication of God the Son. Second, Jesus was literally dead before the resurrection, not simply injured. Thus His resurrection was no mere resuscitation. Notice also that Peter personifies **death** as an actual force that holds the deceased in its embrace. Third, death's power was overcome by the resurrection, which means that believers should no longer fear it.

2:25-28 The second OT passage Peter cited is [Ps 16:8-11](#). He recognized that Jesus was the one about whom David had prophesied, one who would not see the **decay** of death (also in [v. 31](#)).



2:29-30 Peter identified **David** as a **prophet** because he had prophesied through his psalm about the Messiah. David would have treasured this God-given foreknowledge because it entailed Israel's eventual salvation through his own progeny. David would have a victorious descendant **on his throne**. Peter saw all of this as having been fulfilled in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is now seated at God's right hand ([v. 25](#); [Eph 1:20](#)).

1. Jeremy Royal Howard, ed., *HCSB Study Bible*, (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2010), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "Acts 2".

[2:32](#) Throughout this passage Peter has affirmed the reality and significance of Jesus' resurrection. Now he states most clearly the basis of his claims: he and the rest of the apostles were all **witnesses** to the risen Jesus. They had seen the risen Christ for themselves.

[2:34-35](#) The third and final OT passage cited by Peter is [Ps 110:1](#). Peter cited David as the authority for his seeing Jesus as seated at God's **right hand**, with all of His **enemies** in full subjection. The basis of this victory and exaltation was Jesus' resurrection.

[2:36](#) Peter addressed his words specifically to Jews (**the house of Israel**) and affirmed that Jesus whom they crucified was **both Lord and Messiah**. By calling Jesus "Lord and Messiah," Peter was staking the biggest possible claims. "Lord" is reserved in the Greek translation of the OT (the Septuagint) for God (Yahweh). Thus Peter says Jesus is God. Peter further noted that Jesus was the Messiah (anointed one), Israel's hope for salvation.

[2:37](#) Peter's audience **came under deep conviction** because they realized their guilt in the execution of Jesus, plus they were convinced by Peter's passionate eyewitness testimony and his description of how the events surrounding Jesus' death and resurrection fulfilled OT prophecies about the promised Messiah. This prompted them to ask the question that anyone hearing the gospel should ask, **Brothers, what must we do?**

[2:38](#) Peter's answer indicates three major components in conversion. One must **repent**, which means turning from sin. To **be baptized... in the name of Jesus** publicly declares our repentance and faith, plus it symbolically identifies us with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. The **Holy Spirit** is given as a gift and seal of conversion, empowering the believer for the life of faith.

[2:39](#) One of the major themes of the book of Acts is that the message of salvation through Jesus Christ extends not just to the people of Israel but also beyond them to **as many as... God will call**. The Gentiles were **far off** in two senses: they were geographically far removed from Israel, but even more significantly they were "far off" from knowledge of the one true God.

[2:41](#) In response to Peter's preaching, Luke commented in an understated way that **about 3,000 people were added** to the community of believers. Note the close link between coming to faith and being **baptized**. There was apparently no delay between profession of faith and baptism. The large number of converts ("3,000") was made possible by the huge crowds who had traveled to Jerusalem from all over the Mediterranean region for the Passover celebration.

English Standard Version - Study Bible²

Acts 2:22-41

2:23 Peter combines a clear affirmation of God's sovereignty over world events and human responsibility for evil deeds. Although Jesus was **delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God**, showing that God had both foreknown and foreordained that Jesus would be crucified, that still did not absolve of responsibility those who contributed to his death, for Peter goes on to say, "**you crucified and killed**" him. Though one may not understand fully how God's sovereign ordination of events can be compatible with human responsibility for evil, both are clearly affirmed here and in many other passages of Scripture (cf. notes on [3:13-16](#); [3:17](#); [4:27](#); [4:28](#)). **by the hands of lawless men**. Peter also places responsibility on the Gentile officials and soldiers who actually crucified Jesus.

2:25-31 Peter quoted [Ps. 16:8-11](#) as a text pointing to the resurrection of Jesus, noting that David spoke of God not abandoning him to death. He then reasoned that, because David died, the psalm must have been speaking about one of his descendants. Since Jesus is the only one who conquered death and is a descendant of David, he must be the promised Messiah whom David foresaw.

2:29 Both the OT ([1 Kings 2:10](#); [Neh. 3:16](#)) and early Jewish tradition locate David's **tomb** on the south side of Jerusalem. The traditional tomb location is marked today by medieval Islamic and Christian buildings. Some suggest that this is where the earliest church met (e.g., [Acts 2:44-45](#)). Thus Peter may be referring to an earlier traditional tomb not far from where he was speaking.

2:31 he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ. Peter affirms that David, who was not only a king but also "a prophet" ([v. 30](#)), was able to foresee that Christ would be raised from the dead. Throughout the OT God was leading his prophets to predict the events of Christ's earthly life (cf. [Luke 24:25-27](#); [Acts 3:18](#); [1 Pet. 1:18-20](#)). [Acts 2:30-31](#) looks back to the citation in [v. 27](#) and forward to the seating in [v. 34](#), linking Peter's argument together by an allusion to [Psalm 132](#) and God's promise to David.

2:33 The interactive and differentiated relationship among the persons of the Trinity is clearly evident in this verse. Thus God the Father first gave **the promise** that **the Holy Spirit** would come in a greater, more powerful way to accomplish his work in people's lives (as indicated in Peter's quote from [Joel 2](#) in [Acts 2:17-19](#)). Then, when Christ's work on earth was accomplished, Christ was **exalted** to the second highest position of authority in the universe, namely, **at the right hand of God**, with ruling power delegated to him by God the Father. Then Christ **received** authority **from the Father** to send the Holy Spirit in this new fullness. Finally, on the day of Pentecost, Jesus himself **poured out** the Holy Spirit on the disciples in a new and more powerful way (cf. [vv. 1-11](#)); the image of pouring suggests overflowing abundance and fullness.

2:34 When Peter says that David **did not ascend into the heavens**, he is referring to his body, not his soul (cf. [John 20:17](#)).

2:38 repent and be baptized. This does not imply that people can be saved without having faith in Christ as Savior, because the need to believe is implied both in the command to "repent" and also in the command to "be baptized... **in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.**" The willingness to submit to baptism is an outward expression of inward faith in Christ (cf. [1 Pet. 3:21](#)). (On baptism "in the name of Jesus Christ," see note on [Acts 10:48](#).) The gospel can be summarized in different ways. Sometimes faith alone is named as the one thing necessary for salvation (see [John 3:16](#);

2. Lane T. Dennis, ed., *ESV Study Bible, The: English Standard Version*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Bibles, 2008), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "Acts 2".

[Acts 16:31](#); [Rom. 10:9](#); [Eph. 2:8-9](#)), other times repentance alone is named ([Luke 24:47](#); [Acts 3:19](#); [5:31](#); [17:30](#); [2 Cor. 7:10](#)), and sometimes both are named ([Acts 20:21](#)). Genuine faith always involves repentance, and vice versa. Repentance includes a change of mind that ends up trusting God (i.e., having faith). On repentance, see notes on [Matt. 3:2](#); [3:5-6](#). **The gift of the Holy Spirit** does not mean some specific spiritual “gift” as in [1 Corinthians 12-14](#) but rather the gift of the Spirit himself, coming to dwell within the believer.

[2:39](#) Peter’s word that the promise was not just for the Jews who were listening but **for all who are far off** implies the inclusion of Gentiles (cf. [Eph. 2:13](#), [17](#)). **Everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself** indicates that salvation is ultimately God’s work, and comes to those whom the Lord effectively calls into personal relationship with him.

[2:40](#) **many other words**. Luke was able to provide only a small portion of Peter’s sermon.

[2:41](#) The **three thousand** converts at Pentecost were **added** to the initial body of 120 believers.

NLT Life Application Study Bible³

Acts 2:22-41

[2:23](#) Everything that happened to Jesus was under God's control. His plans were never disrupted by the Roman government or the Jewish officials. This was especially comforting to those facing oppression during the time of the early Christian church.

[2:24](#) Peter spoke forth rightly about the Resurrection. As Peter preached, the events of Christ's death and resurrection were still hot news, less than two months old. Christ's execution had been carried out in public before many witnesses. His empty tomb was available for inspection just a short distance away. If Christ had not truly died, Peter's message would have been laughed at or ignored. If Christ had not been resurrected, authorities could have produced his body and put an end to this new faith. But Peter and the apostles had witnessed the risen Christ. Changed men, they announced the news with great passion and conviction. Our faith and our credibility also rest on the truth of the empty tomb. Why? For a number of important reasons. According to the apostle Paul in [1 Corinthians 15](#), the resurrection of Christ means that he is the Son of God and that his word can be trusted. It means that his sacrifice for sin was acceptable to God, so we can be completely forgiven. It means that our Savior is alive and active, able to help us in times of need. It also means that one day we, too, will conquer death. The Christian faith rests on the basic fact of the empty tomb. Don't neglect this essential part of the gospel when you share your faith with others.

[2:25-32](#) Peter quoted from [Psalm 16:8-11](#)—a psalm written by David. He explained that David was not writing about himself because David died and was buried ([2:29](#)). Instead, he was writing as a prophet ([2:30](#)) who spoke of the Messiah who would be resurrected. The emphasis here is that Jesus' body was not left to rot in the grave but was, in fact, resurrected and glorified.

3. *Life Application Study Bible*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1988), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 1818-1819.

[2:37](#) After Peter's powerful, Spirit-filled message, the people were deeply moved and asked, "What should we do?" This is the basic question we must ask. It is not enough to be sorry for our sins. We must repent, ask God to forgive us, and then live like forgiven people. Has God spoken to you through his Word or through the words of another believer? Like Peter's audience, ask God what you should do, and then obey.

[2:38, 39](#) If you want to follow Christ, you must "repent of your sins, turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ." To repent means to turn from sin, to change the direction of your life from selfishness and rebellion against God's laws. At the same time, you must *turn to* Christ, depending on him for forgiveness, mercy, guidance, and purpose. We cannot save ourselves—only God can save us. Baptism identifies us with Christ and with the community of believers. It is a condition of discipleship and a sign of faith.

[2:40-43](#) About 3,000 people became new believers when Peter preached the Good News about Christ. These new Christians were united with the other believers, taught by the apostles, and included in the prayer meetings and fellowship. New believers in Christ need to be in groups, where they can learn God's Word, pray, and mature in the faith. If you have just begun a relationship with Christ, seek out other believers for fellowship, prayer, and teaching. This is the way to grow.