

# Pentecost

## *February 19, 2023*

### Lesson Summary

#### ***Main Passages***

Acts 2:32-41

#### ***Session Outline***

1. Bold Preaching (Acts 2:32-33)
2. Call for Response (Acts 2:34-37)
3. Powerful Invitation (Acts 2:38-41)

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#### ***Theological Theme***

When the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, everything changed, and the church was born. From that day forward the Holy Spirit has brought powerful change to people's lives through the church.



## Leader Guide

# Pentecost

### Introduction

Most of us know people who change the mood when they show up. It may be a bold person who brings energy that goes to a different level. It could be a negative person who automatically dampens the atmosphere. It may be a funny person who lightens a group up and brings levity. There are many ways people can bring change, and it is difficult to miss when you are in the presence of someone like that.

Although there are people who bring change when they arrive, none of them can compare to the change that the Holy Spirit brought when He arrived at Pentecost. After waiting for the gift of the Spirit to come, the group of disciples and believers who were gathered in Jerusalem experienced the miraculous difference the Holy Spirit makes.

- ❓ Who is someone you know that changes a room positively when he or she shows up?
- ❓ What is it about him or her that makes a difference?

### Session Summary



The disciples and fellow believers had been waiting in Jerusalem as Jesus instructed. When the promised Holy Spirit arrived, everything changed. Under the power of the Spirit, Peter preached a message that was heard and received by thousands of people.

What happened at Pentecost was miraculous and is considered the birth of the church. Numerous people were convicted of their sin and repented that day. What had been promised and prophesied was happening, and the world was forever different following the arrival of the Holy Spirit.

## 1. Bold Preaching (Acts 2:32-33)

In the powerful moments after the Holy Spirit came to the believers in Jerusalem, Peter took a stand and began preaching in the newfound power he experienced. The main subject of his message was Jesus, and he spoke passionately about the Savior. In the previous verses of chapter 2, the results of the arrival of the Holy Spirit are described in more detail. Some onlookers began mocking the believers and making fun of them for the changes they experienced. Peter called them out and defended his fellow believers.

Imagine the moment as Peter lived out things from prophecies in earlier Scriptures. He quoted passages that were written many years before even as he addressed the topic of the resurrected Messiah. This day was the culmination of the promise from Jesus to send His Holy Spirit. People couldn't help but notice what was happening and Peter took advantage of the opportunity to preach about Jesus.


-  How have you noticed a difference in your life or the lives of others because of the Holy Spirit's presence?
-  Who are you praying for that needs the Holy Spirit, needs to receive Christ as Lord and Savior?

The resurrection was contested by many, but Peter pointed out that there were plenty of witnesses to Jesus's resurrection and ascension. Jesus had been resurrected and then ascended into heaven after forty days. The most powerful testimony possible is that of eyewitnesses. Peter declared there were plenty who could verify what Jesus had done.

Peter then addressed the comments and criticism from the observers who took note of the changes experienced through the arrival of the Holy Spirit. This was an uncommon occurrence, and Peter made it clear that everything happening that day was a direct result of Jesus's resurrection and ascension. He told them Jesus had poured out His Spirit who brought about these changes. It was all a part of God's great plan, and they were only doing their part in spreading the Word as they experienced the filling of the Holy Spirit.

-  Why do you think people were criticizing what they noticed happening after the pouring out of the Spirit?


Prior to Pentecost, the Holy Spirit had not been continually present with individuals. Since that day, whoever receives Jesus as Savior is gifted the Spirit. Those believers gathered in a room to wait for the Spirit to come, but we are blessed to receive His presence immediately. In both cases, the result is the same—when the Holy Spirit is present, things change.

 Application: Where do you need to seek change through the Holy Spirit?


## 2. Call for Response (Acts 2:34-37)

As Peter continued his message, he quoted Psalm 110:1 that foretold the deity of Christ. It's extremely important that all people know and recognize the fact that Jesus is God. He was not just a good man or a great prophet. He is the long-awaited Messiah, and He is God. Even though they crucified Him, God had declared Him both Lord and Christ. Those who refused to believe Jesus is who He claimed to be needed to know the truth about Him.

It is the responsibility of all believers to share the message about Jesus to the unbelieving world. Once the truth is proclaimed, each person must decide what his or her response will be. Peter made it clear that a response is necessary when confronted with the truth.

 What role has the truth about Jesus played in your life to this point?

The truth Peter preached called for a response from the people. The text tells us many felt the words deep inside as if it were cutting to their hearts. The phrasing “pierced to the heart” (v. 37) is a good description of what conviction feels like. In this moment, truth pierces one's soul and creates feelings of conviction deep inside. Just as cutting something opens it, conviction opens the heart and mind to see our sin and calls for a response to that recognition of sin.

 When was a time you were “pierced to the heart” (v. 37) with conviction from the Holy Spirit?

In response to his message, the people asked Peter a question. Instead of mocking him, they sought his help and advice. No one forced them to stay and listen. They were not coerced into listening to the entire message, but people are drawn to the Holy Spirit's work. The Spirit's work is certain, and those who are drawn to Him want to know more.

We often think of sharing the good news of Jesus as going to others. But following Peter's message at Pentecost, the Spirit worked so that people actually came to the believers for more information. They were deeply moved by the bold proclamation from Peter, and they asked him what their response should be. They knew a response was necessary but didn't know what that was. There are times we become overwhelmed and know we need to do something but are not quite sure what to do. That was what happened at Pentecost, and the people sought Peter for further guidance.

- Application: How might God be calling you to help others who might not be sure what to do? Maybe share a meal or cup of coffee or offer to pray for them? Maybe start a group with friends and neighbors?

### 3. Powerful Invitation (Acts 2:38-41)

Instead of wanting to run Peter out of town or arrest him, the people wanted to know more about how to follow Jesus. What an incredible testimony of the power of the Holy Spirit. To see a crowd change completely was evidence of the work of God that took place and likely encouraged to Peter and the other disciples.

- When have you clearly seen the Holy Spirit working? How did that encourage you to help others follow His guidance?

Peter answered the people with clear, direct, and simple words. He didn't criticize them for their previous unbelief or rejection of Jesus. He didn't try to shame them or make them pay for their sins before coming to Christ. He told them to repent. To repent is not to just be sorry or feel bad. It is about agreeing with God about your sin and making a complete turn toward Him and away from your sin. Where the people had so recently called for the crucifixion of Jesus, they would now flip their thinking and embrace Him as their Savior and Lord. Repentance carries the idea of stopping, turning, and moving forward toward Jesus.

- How have you experienced repentance? How might you describe this experience to another person?

You can't turn toward God without turning away from the things He is against. Once a person chooses to repent and turn toward God, the next step is baptism. Peter told the people they needed to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. This baptism would be a public expression of their complete faith and trust in Jesus.

If they chose to repent and be baptized, then they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Peter wanted to make it clear that any who chose to obey the Lord would be blessed with the same powerful Spirit that the original believers had received. He also said this promise would apply for generations to come. Believers today can testify that this promise is still being fulfilled. The text tells us Peter didn't stop at this point but continued encouraging those listening to turn to Jesus. Christians today should follow Peter's example and continually share the truth of the gospel as we invite people to repent of their sins and be baptized into faith in Christ.

## A Miraculous Response

Having set forth Jesus as their Messiah, Peter now called on his Jewish audience to repent and be baptized, and they would receive the same Spirit that they had just witnessed so powerfully. The response was also miraculous. Three thousand were added to the Christian community that day.

There was a mighty harvest of souls in response to Peter's message. The Bible says about three thousand were added to the church that day. What an incredible move of the Spirit that took the church from something around 120 people to over 3000! Many of the people were likely Jewish travelers who had come to Jerusalem for Pentecost. They may have expected something to happen during their travels, but they encountered more than they could have imagined. The people who repented and were baptized that day would then have traveled back to their homes and taken their new faith with them. The impact from Peter's message may have numbered about three thousand where it happened but could have been multiplied many times over as those new believers went home and shared about what happened. The text also points out that those who were baptized had received the message being proclaimed. If they had not received what Peter preached, then they would not have submitted themselves to being baptized. The two go hand in hand and should continue to be held together today.



Application: With whom will you share about your own faith journey of repenting and being baptized?

## Conclusion

Once the promised Holy Spirit was poured out on the believers waiting in Jerusalem, nothing would ever be the same again. Peter took advantage of the opportunity to preach the truth to those who were gathered, and he spoke with boldness through the empowering of the Holy Spirit. The same people who had rejected Jesus and called for His crucifixion openly received the truth that Jesus is the Messiah and God.

The powerful message from Peter amazed and intrigued the crowd. They listened to Peter as he quoted from Old Testament passages about the deity of Christ and declared other truths about Jesus that caused the people to be cut to the heart. Conviction from the Spirit calls people to respond, and the very ones who had so recently rejected Jesus were drawn to a relationship with Him. The people realized a response was needed, and they asked Peter what they should do next to follow Jesus.

Peter answered them with a simple, clear instruction. He told them to repent and be baptized. Repentance is all about turning away from sin and the things God is against while turning to God. Baptism is a public declaration of new life and faith in Jesus. The people who chose to accept Christ that day were about three thousand. This huge harvest of souls was instrumental in taking the gospel to many other places. The result from what God did at Pentecost that day is immeasurable because those new believers went away changed and shared their new faith back in their hometowns and regions.

- ❓ Where are you seeking the work of the Holy Spirit in your life? How does today's passage encourage you in that regard?
- ❓ Ask your group to prayerfully consider how the Holy Spirit is leading you to participate in taking the gospel to others (Going on a mission trip, collect supplies for missions, support financially, offer daily prayer support, etc.)
- ❓ How will you rely on the Holy Spirit as you seek gospel conversations with others this week?

## Prayer of Response

*Thank God for the way He is at work around you. Ask for sensitivity and boldness to respond when you have opportunity to share the truth of the gospel.*

## Additional Resources

- *The Book of Acts* by F.F. Bruce
- *The Acts of the Apostles* by David Peterson
- *Acts* by Charles Swindoll

For information on Missions, visit: [brentwood.church/missions](http://brentwood.church/missions)

## Disciples Multiplying Disciples



### Questions to Guide Your Group's Discussion

1. What does this passage say?
2. What did this passage mean to its original audience?
3. What does this passage tell us about God?
4. What does this passage tell us about man?
5. What does this passage demand of me?
6. How does this passage change the way I relate to people? (*How can you use this information this week at work or with friends and neighbors?*)
7. How does this passage prompt me to pray to God?

\*Adapted from Seven Arrows by Matt Rogers pastor of The Church at Cherrydale, Greenville, SC

## DxD This Week

### ***Call to Action***

God is always at work in those around us. Ask the Lord for strength to help you make the most of every opportunity to share the hope you have in Christ.



## For Next Week

### Session Title

- See and Hear

### Main Passages

- Acts 3:11-26

### Session Outline

1. Time to Hear (Acts 3:11-16)
2. Call to Repentance (Acts 3:17-21)
3. Warning (Acts 3:22-26)

### Memorize

*Peter replied, "Repent 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." - Acts 2:38*

# Historical Context of Acts

## Purpose

The book of Acts emphasizes the work of God through the Holy Spirit in the lives of people who devoted themselves to Jesus Christ, especially Paul as he led the Gentile missionary endeavor. It is no exaggeration to say that the Christian church was built through the dynamic power of the Spirit working through chosen vessels. Another important concept is the radial spread of the gospel from Jews to Gentiles, from Jerusalem to Judea, from Samaria and on to the rest of the world (1:8). Thus Christianity transformed from being a sect within Judaism to a world religion that eventually gained acceptance everywhere, even in the heart of the pagan Roman Empire: Rome itself.

## Author

The book of Acts is formally anonymous. The traditional view is that the author was the same person who wrote the Gospel of Luke—Luke the physician and traveling companion of Paul (Col 4:14; 2Tm 4:11; Phm 24). As early as the second century AD, church leaders such as Irenaeus wrote that Luke was the author of Acts. Irenaeus based his view on the “we” passages in Acts, five sections where the author changes from the third person (“he/she” and “they”) to first-person plural (“we”) as he narrates the action (16:10–17; 20:5–15; 21:1–18; 27:1–29; 28:1–16). Irenaeus and many scholars since his time have interpreted these passages to mean that the author of Acts was one of the eyewitness companions of Paul. Luke fits this description better than any other candidate, especially given the similar themes between the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts.

## Setting

The date of composition of the book of Acts is to a large extent directly tied to the issue of authorship. A number of scholars have argued that Acts should be dated to the early 60s (at the time of Paul’s imprisonment). Acts closes with Paul still in prison in Rome (28:30–31). Although it is possible that Luke wrote at a later date, a time when Paul had been released, it is more plausible to think that he completed this book while Paul was still in prison. Otherwise he would have ended the book by telling about Paul’s release.

## Special Features

The book of Acts provides a glimpse into the first three decades of the early church (ca AD 30–63) as it spread and multiplied after the ascension of Jesus Christ. It is not a detailed or comprehensive history. Rather, it focuses on the role played by apostles such as Peter, who ministered primarily to Jews, and Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles.

## Extended Commentary

### Acts 2:32-41

2:31–32. Not only did David understand Jesus' coming, he also foretold his resurrection. Standing in the crowd that day were many local residents who were familiar with the events that had transpired in Jerusalem less than two months earlier. Just in case their memories had lapsed, Peter raised again the broad banner of those courageous early Christians: we are all witnesses of the fact.

2:33–36. Peter wanted to proclaim the whole gospel, so he could not stop at the crucifixion and resurrection. In these verses he moves on to the exaltation and the coming of the Holy Spirit, bringing his listeners right up to the moment. Another quote from the Psalms (110:1) surely must have stabbed their collective attention. The humble carpenter of Nazareth was not only the Messiah, but now he lives in heaven and has caused all the Pentecostal commotion which evoked this sermon in the first place. Showing an enormous confidence in his God and his message, Peter used a phrase appearing only here in the New Testament (all Israel) and hammered home his final point: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ. In fine homiletical style he returned to his original text (v. 21) and, along with the prophet Joel, extolled the messiahship of his Lord. The one you think dead is your living Lord, Master, and Messiah!

2:37. The combination of God's Scripture and God's Spirit working through God's servant had the intended effect. From their initial question What does this mean? (2:12), the people now progressed to specific response—Brothers, what shall we do? The phrase cut to the heart translates *katenugesan* meaning “stung” or “stunned.” Had some people listening to Peter that day also screamed for blood in Pilate's hall? While the word conviction does not appear in our verse, this clearly reflects that heart attitude. The New Testament uses this word to describe the work of the Holy Spirit by which we see ourselves as we are in God's sight.

2:38–39. Peter hesitated not a moment for the answer to their question, calling for repentance and baptism and offering forgiveness and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Repentance is not a new theme in the New Testament, having appeared in the ministry of John the Baptist (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3) and in the preaching of Jesus (Mark 1:15; Luke 13:3). The context shows baptism here refers to water, not the Holy Spirit. In the New Testament, water baptism became the uniform of the Lord's people. Today we call it “believers' baptism,” the conscious identification with Jesus on the part of those who have trusted him for salvation. The gift of the Holy Spirit then became the seal of salvation. To whom is this available? For all whom the Lord our God will call.

2:40–41. Luke hastens to tell us we do not have the entire sermon recorded in his book. Peter spoke many other words and pleaded with his hearers who responded. That day God added three thousand people to the small number of believers already serving as Christ's witnesses. But wait. Don't miss the importance of what Luke does not say. This time there was no sound, no flame, and no foreign language. These people received the Holy Spirit because that's what Peter promised in Jesus' name. Pentecost was a one-time event, with only a mild echo or two appearing elsewhere during the first century. Are we to believe that Peter baptized three

thousand people on that one day? Of course not. The Bible knows no hierarchical system whereby people must be baptized at the hand of some official or titled clergy. We should probably assume all 120 believers assisted in this magnificent demonstration. In the space of just a few verses, we see what happens when people trust Christ for salvation. First, they must recognize their need; then, they must receive God's gift; and finally, they must obey the message.<sup>1</sup>

## References

1. Kenneth O. Gangel, *Acts*, vol. 5, Holman New Testament Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998), 29–31.

## Author Bio

### **Kenneth Gangel (Acts)**

Dr. Kenneth O. Gangel (1935-2009): A prolific author and an experienced leader has been influential in the field of Christian education for over forty years. He's written numerous articles and over 50 books, while pastoring, teaching, raising a family and leading schools. His impact reaches around the world through students, co-authored books, and working with leaders of churches and schools.

### **F.F. Bruce (The Book of Acts)**

F.F. Bruce (1910 - 1990) was a distinguished scholar on the life and ministry of the Apostle Paul, and wrote several studies the best known of which is Paul, Apostle of the Heart Set Free (published in the United Kingdom under the title Paul, the Apostle of the Free Spirit). He also wrote commentaries on several biblical books including the Gospel of John, Acts, 1 & 2 Corinthians, and the Epistle to the Hebrews.

### **David Peterson (The Acts of the Apostles)**

David Peterson was senior research fellow and lecturer in New Testament at Moore Theological College, Sydney, where he still teaches part time. He served as principal of Oak Hill College, London, from 1996 to 2007. His books include Engaging with God, Possessed by God (both IVP) and Hebrews and Perfection (Cambridge University Press).

### **Charles Swindoll (Acts)**

Charles R. Swindoll is the founder and senior pastor-teacher of Stonebriar Community Church in Frisco, Texas. But Chuck's listening audience extends far beyond a local church body, as Insight for Living airs on major Christian radio markets around the world. Chuck's extensive writing ministry has also served the body of Christ worldwide, and his leadership as president and now chancellor of Dallas Theological Seminary has helped prepare and equip a new generation of men and women for ministry. Chuck and his wife, Cynthia, his partner in life and ministry, have four grown children, ten grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.