



Union Grove Bible Institute

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Acts 2 / Joel 2 Part II

The Promise of the Holy Spirit and Miraculous Signs

Acts 2:25–35 These verses include four proofs of the Lord's resurrection and Ascension: (a) The prophecy of Psalm 16:8–11 and the presence of David's **tomb** (Acts 2:25–31), (b) the witnesses of the Resurrection (v. 32), (c) the supernatural events of Pentecost (v. 33), and (d) the Ascension of David's greater Son (Ps. 110:1; Acts 2:34–35).

The word translated **grave** in verses 27 and 31 is *hadēs*, which means either the grave (as here) or the underworld of departed spirits.

Peter's point is that since **David**, the **patriarch** and prophet **was** dead and **buried**, he could not have been referring to himself in Psalm 16:8–11; hence he was writing about **the Christ** ("Messiah") and His **resurrection**. The **oath** (Acts 2:30) looks back to Psalm 132:11 (cf. 2 Sam. 7:15–16). **God ... raised ... Jesus to life**, and **exalted** Him (cf. Acts 3:13; Phil. 2:9) **to the Father's right hand** (cf. Acts 5:30–31; Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; 1 Peter 3:22). Thus Jesus had the authority to send **the promised Holy Spirit** (Acts 1:5, 8; John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7), whose presence was evidenced by what they saw ("tongues of fire," Acts 2:3) and heard ("a violent wind," v. 2), and the apostles speaking in other languages (vv. 4, 6, 8, 11).

Just as David was not speaking of himself in Psalm 16:8–11, so in Psalm 110:1 he was not speaking of himself. David was not resurrected (Acts 2:29, 31) nor **did he ascend to heaven** (v. 34). **The Lord** is Yahweh God who spoke **to my** (David's) **Lord**, who is Christ, God's Son.

On five occasions in Acts some of the apostles said they were **witnesses** of the resurrected Christ (v. 32; 3:15; 5:32; 10:39–41; 13:30–31). They knew whereof they spoke!

2:36 Here is the conclusion of Peter's argument. The noun **Lord**, referring to **Christ**, probably is a reference to Yahweh. The same word *kyrios* is used of **God** in verses 21, 34, and 39 (cf. Phil. 2:9). This is a strong affirmation of Christ's deity.

2:37 Verses 37–40 contain the application of Peter's sermon. The verb **cut** (*katenygēsan*) means "to strike or prick violently, to stun." The convicting work of the Spirit (cf. John 16:8–11) in their hearts was great. Their question had a ring of desperation about it (cf. Acts 16:30). If the Jews had crucified their Messiah and He was now exalted, what was left for them to do? **What** could and must they **do**?

2:38–39 Peter's answer was forthright. First they were to **repent**. This verb (*metanoēsate*) means "change your outlook," or "have a change of heart; reverse the direction of your life." This obviously results in a change of conduct, but the emphasis is on the mind or outlook. The Jews had rejected Jesus; now they were to trust in Him. Repentance was repeatedly part of the apostles' message in Acts (v. 38; 3:19; 5:31; 8:22; 11:18; 13:24; 17:30; 19:4; 20:21; 26:20).

A problem revolves around the command "be baptized" and its connection with the remainder of **2:38**. There are several views: (1) One is that both repentance and baptism result in remission of sins. In this view, baptism is essential for salvation. The problem with this interpretation is that elsewhere in Scripture forgiveness of sins is based on faith alone (John 3:16, 36; Rom. 4:1–17; 11:6; Gal. 3:8–9; Eph. 2:8–9; etc.). Furthermore Peter, the same speaker, later promised forgiveness of sins on the basis of faith alone (Acts 5:31; 10:43; 13:38; 26:18).

(2) A second interpretation translates 2:38, "Be baptized ... on the basis of the remission of your sins." The preposition used here is *eis* which, with the accusative case, may mean "on account of, on the basis of." It is used in this way in Matthew 3:11; 12:41; and Mark 1:4. Though it is possible for this construction to mean "on the basis of," this is not its normal meaning; *eis* with the accusative case usually describes purpose or direction.

(3) A third view takes the clause **and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ** as parenthetical. Several factors support this interpretation: (a) The verb makes a distinction between singular and plural verbs and nouns. The verb “repent” is plural and so is the pronoun “your” in the clause **so that your sins may be forgiven** (lit., “unto the remission of your sins,” *eis apheresin tōn hamartiōn hymōn*). Therefore the verb “repent” must go with the purpose of forgiveness of sins. On the other hand the imperative “be baptized” is singular, setting it off from the rest of the sentence. (b) This concept fits with Peter’s proclamation in Acts 10:43 in which the same expression “sins may be forgiven” (*aphesin hamartiōn*) occurs. There it is granted on the basis of faith alone. (c) In Luke 24:47 and Acts 5:31 the same writer, Luke, indicates that repentance results in remission of sins.

The gift of the Holy Spirit is God’s **promise** (cf. 1:5, 8; 2:33) to those who turn to the Lord, including Jews and their descendants and those **who are far off**, that is, Gentiles (cf. Eph. 2:13, 17, 19). Acts 2:38–39 put together the human side of salvation (“repent”) and the divine side (**call** means “to elect”; cf. Rom. 8:28–30).

2:40 Peter’s **words** in this verse look back to verses 23 and 36. Israel was guilty of a horrendous sin; individual Jews could be spared from God’s judgment on that **generation** if they would repent (cf. Matt. 21:41–44; 22:7; 23:34–24:2). They would be set apart to Christ and His church if only they would be disassociated from Israel.

2:41 **Three thousand** who believed **were baptized**, thus displaying their identification with Christ. This group of people immediately joined the fellowship of believers.

2:42 The believers first continued steadfastly (*proskarterountes*, “persisting in or continuing in”; cf. 1:14; 2:46; 6:4; 8:13; 10:7; Rom. 12:12; 13:6; Col. 4:2) in **the apostles’ teaching** or doctrine. The second was **fellowship**, which is defined as **the breaking of bread and ... prayer**. The omission of “and” between “fellowship” and “to the breaking of bread and to prayer” indicates the last two activities are appositional to fellowship. Perhaps the breaking of bread included both the Lord’s Table and a common meal (cf. Acts 2:46; 20:7; 1 Cor. 10:16; 11:23–25; Jude 12).

2:43 **Wonders** (*terata*, “miracles evoking awe”) and **miraculous signs** (*sēmeia*, “miracles pointing to a divine truth”) authenticated the veracity of **the apostles** (cf. 2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:3–4). The apostles performed many such “signs and wonders” (Acts 4:30; 5:12; 6:8; 8:6, 13; 14:3; 15:12). Christ too had performed many “wonders” and “signs”—and also “miracles” (*dynameis*, “works of power”).

2:44–45 The **selling** of property and the common possession of the proceeds may imply that the early church expected the Lord to return soon and establish His kingdom. This may explain why the practice was not continued. Holding **everything in common** was not socialism or communism because it was voluntary (cf. 4:32, 34–35; 5:4). Also their goods were not evenly distributed but were given to meet needs as they arose.

2:46–47 The activities described in verses 42–47 would tend to separate the *believers* from traditional Judaism even though **every day** (cf. v. 47) **they continued** (*proskarterountes*; cf. v. 42) **to meet together in the temple courts**. One of the subthemes of Acts is joy, (5:41; 8:8, 39; 11:23; 12:14; 13:48, 52; 14:17; 15:3, 31; 16:34; 21:17). In their fellowship **they broke bread in their homes and ate together** (cf. 2:42) with joy. (The word **praising** [*ainountes*] is used only nine times in the NT, seven of them by Luke: Luke 2:13, 20; 19:37; 24:53; Acts 2:47; 3:8–9; Rom. 15:11; Rev. 19:5).

With the first of seven summary progress reports (cf. Acts 6:7; 9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20; 28:30–31) Luke brought this section of Acts to a close: each day others **were being saved**.¹

¹ Stanley D. Toussaint, “Acts,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 357–360.