

Acts 2 - John Karmelich

1. There are certain dates in history that most people are aware of. They are special because they mark special events that have changed the course of history.
 - a) The 4th of July in 1776 comes to mind.
 - b) So does Columbus in 1492.
 - c) For Christians there are several dates that have affected the course of history.
 - i) The specific date God became man (Jesus' birth) is the date by which we mark our calendars.
 - a) (If you want to be real technical, most scholars believe they were off by a year or two, but that's beside the point).
 - ii) I would consider the date Martin Luther posted "his 95 Theses" on the door of the Wittenberg church as the "birth date" of the reformation; the day the Protestant movement began.
 - d) If you asked me the most *important* date in history, I would argue it was the date that Jesus rose again, because most believers in the Messiah of Israel looked forward to that date, or back upon that date as the central core of the Gospel message.
 - e) But if I had to pick "the runner up" for the second most important date in history, it would be the date, as described in Acts Chapter 2.
 - i) This was the date that the "church" as we know it, was officially born.
 - ii) Prior to this date, we had only followers of Jesus.
 - f) I would describe this date as "The Pentecost."
2. Pentecost is a Jewish holiday that was ordained by Moses. You won't find the word "Pentecost" in the Old Testament because it was a Greek word.
 - a) Remember that Greek was the common language of the day. Only the Rabbi-scholars studied Hebrew.
 - b) Pentecost roughly means "50 days." The Hebrew term for this holiday is called "feast of weeks" in most translations. It was one of 7 holidays when all Jewish people were required to have a holy day before God. (The first 3 were celebrated together; Pentecost was celebrated individually; and the last 3 were celebrated together). Religious Jews went to Jerusalem to celebrate these, if possible.
 - i) The reason the Greek word is "Pentecost" is that it is the 50th day after the feast day of "firstfruits," a holiday that is part of the Passover season.
 - c) The point I'm making is that this day, as described in Acts 2, wasn't just
 - i) "a" Pentecost, it was "the" Pentecost.
 - ii) Just like the 1776 date was "the" 4th of July.
 - iii) Why do I say that? Glad you asked!
 - d) All 7 of the Jewish holidays ordained by Moses have "prophetic" implications.
 - i) The "original" Passover was when God spared the first-born Israelites in Egypt by killing a lamb and smearing its blood on the door.
 - a) Christians believe Passover was prophetic of Jesus dying on the cross. There are lots of symbols associated with that event. For further information, see my notes on Exodus 12 or get a good study bible/commentary and read it for yourself.
 - b) There are 3 holidays that run together in the springtime: Passover, Firstfruits, and 7-day Feast of Unleavened Bread.
 - c) The other 2 spring holidays *also* have ties to Jesus' first coming.
 - d) Passover is "unique" among the seven holidays ordained by Moses. The first 3 are in the spring. Passover comes 50 days later. The last 3 are in the fall.

3. Back to Passover:
 - a) Passover is unique among the 7 holidays. It is the only holiday that permits Jews to eat "leavened" bread. Leaven, or yeast, is an Old Testament symbol of sin!
 - b) Why am I getting into all this? Listen to what Jesus said:
 - c) "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough." (Matthew 13:33b NIV)
 - i) Jesus said that the kingdom of heaven (a reference to the church, in this instance) will have yeast (or leaven) mixed in.
 - ii) It describes growth (as a loaf of bread rises with yeast).
 - iii) But it also warns of corruption. Just as the history of the church has had both its wonderful history and embarrassing history at the same time.
 - d) Okay, I'm only on page 2 and I haven't even started the text yet. I went way off on a tangent.
 - i) Since Acts 2 represents the *birth* of the church, it is important to understand its ties to Passover. The first 3 Jewish holidays tie to Jesus' 1st coming. Passover ties to the birth of the church.
 - a) Many Bible prophecy commentators believe the *other* (fall) 3 Jewish festivals may have some sort of fulfillment in Jesus' *second* coming.
 - (1) Those of us who believe the rapture will happen *prior* to the 7-year tribulation period (a.k.a. "the pre-trib" view), well, we don't make long-term plans around that time of the year of the fall feasts, just in case this is *the* anniversary. ☺
4. Before we actually jump into the text, there are a couple of other things to notice about Acts 2.
 - a) Read the chapter from the perspective of *Peter*.
 - i) When you read about Peter in the gospel, he appears to be this "shoot-first-ask-questions-later" type of guy. *Plenty* of energy, not much on thought.
 - a) The joke is the only time Peter opened his mouth was to change feet.
 - b) Peter was most noted for:
 - (1) Being bold enough to swing a sword when Judas/Roman soldiers came to arrest Jesus (John 18:10); and
 - (2) Being too cowardly to admit even *knowing* Jesus when confronted by a little girl at the same time as Jesus' trial. (John 18:17, et al.)
 - ii) Yet here is Peter performing the first public crusade and alter call for Jesus, and doing a terrific, articulate job at teaching the meaning of the Old Testament scriptures.
 - iii) What changed in Peter?
 - a) The answer is simply, the Holy Spirit. Once you are born-again, the Spirit teaches you what to say at the right moment. (John 14:26, et al.) That *does* not excuse you from not *learning* the scriptures though! The Holy Spirit will give you *recall*, not knowledge of the scriptures.
 - b) The application is that the same thing applies to us! God can take the most bumbling failure and turn them into a wonderful success using the Holy Spirit.
 - (1) The history of the Christian church is *filled* with common, ordinary people, who committed their life to God and *then* were used in wonderful and dramatic ways for the glory of God.
 - b) Second, read the story from the perspective of *Luke*, the author.
 - i) Luke was not at this event.
 - ii) Notice the *details* that Luke reported.
 - iii) If you were there, recounting this amazing story, *you would* remember these types of details, simply because they were so unusual.

c) Third, read the story from the point of view of your "average, religious-Jew" in Jerusalem for the Pentecost feast. What would draw you to this event?

5. Okay, over two full pages; not one verse of Acts. Gee, better get going or I'll never make it. ☺

6. Acts Chapter 2, Verse 1: When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. ² Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. ⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit enabled them.

a) First of all, why were they all together in one place?

i) Jesus, after his resurrection, told the disciples not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for the Holy Spirit. (Acts 1:4)

ii) There was probably a 4-6 week gap between Jesus' post-resurrection command in Acts 1:4 and this event in Acts 2. Why the delay?

a) It gave the disciples time to pray together and spend time together.

b) Remember that this group consisted of people that normally wouldn't hang out together except for their common belief in Jesus.

(1) We have ex-harlots, ex-tax collectors, zealots (political radicals), businessmen (fisherman), etc. Imagine the thoughts *these* people had of each other!

(2) This time together gave them time to pray, and develop the nucleus of the church. People of different backgrounds, cultures, and perspectives blending together to become a church-family. A lot like today, isn't it?

b) Notice Luke emphasizes the "when" but not the "where" of Pentecost.

i) Scholars have a field day debating the "where." Where did this take place?

a) Some argue the same upper room that was at the end of Chapter 1.

b) Some argue that they were in front of the Temple. (I take this view).

(1) It's hard to get 3,000 "converts" in the upper room.

c) Since the text doesn't say, we don't know. End of discussion.

c) Notice the words "like" and "seemed to be" in the text.

i) The sound was "like" the wind.

ii) The visual image was "like" tongues of fire.

d) Okay, why the "wind" sound?

i) For starters, God wanted to draw people's attention to these believers.

ii) If I was a religious Jew in Jerusalem, and I heard this loud, powerful sound that was "like" the wind, the first place I'd go is the central place for all Jews, i.e. the "Temple."

a) Why is this important? Remember that the whole purpose of this chapter is to start the church. In order to preach, one needs an audience. God provides that!

iii) There is a view in Judaism that "coincidence is not a kosher word." All things happen for a purpose. The purpose of this wind was to draw people to hear Peter speak.

a) The application for believers is to *look* for God's signs and take those opportunities to let God work *through* you. It may not be as dramatic as this, but I usually find God makes it known to you when a "strange" event occurs and how you can contribute to His kingdom, at that point.

e) Okay, what's the deal with the "tongues of fire"?

i) This is about "word-pictures." If you were with me in my Exodus study, you remember that all the parts of the tabernacle (described in Exodus) were word-pictures for people to study. We have the same things here.

ii) When you picture a "tongue," you think of speaking a language. The root word for speech and tongue are often the same in most languages.

- iii) When you think of "fire," especially to a Jewish mind, you think of God and judgment.
 - a) Moses associated the "burning bush" to the voice of God.
- iv) Noticed the tongues "separated" and came to rest upon them.
 - a) This shows the single source of the tongues. The unity of God.
- f) Okay, this is as good a place as any to summarize the gift of "tongues."
 - i) First, let's define it. "Tongues" is the ability to praise God in a language which you do not speak.
 - ii) If you study the history of the church, people are divided on this one.
 - a) Some churches believe the gift of tongues was *only* for the early church. The use of the gift of "tongues" today is somehow "demonic."
 - (1) Some churches would ask you to go somewhere else if you had the gift of tongues.
 - b) The other extreme is the "*very-Pentecostal*" movement that takes the view you are not *really* a Christian until you can speak in tongues.
 - c) So before I give my personal view, remember that Christian views vary widely.
 - (1) I am "pro-tongues" mainly because I've seen it live and I've heard some amazing testimonials from people I really respect in the church.
- g) With that disclaimer, here's a summary of my view of tongues. (I'm indebted to the late Ray Steadman for much of this summary).
 - i) "Tongues" are always in a known language. They may not be known to the speaker, but they are spoken somewhere.
 - ii) They are addressed to God (not to men) in the form of praise and worship.
 - a) "For anyone who speaks in a tongue does *not speak to men but to God* [emphasis added]. Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit." (1 Corinthians 14:2 NIV)
 - iii) They are intended to be manifested publicly, and never privately.
 - a) "Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit *is given for the common good* [emphasis added]." (1 Corinthians 12:7 NIV)
 - iv) Tongues are a sign to unbelievers, not believers. (Many ultra-Pentecostal churches tend to forget this one.
 - a) "*Tongues, then, are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers* [emphasis added]; prophecy, however, is for believers, not for unbelievers." (1 Cor. 14:22 NIV)
 - v) Tongues should be done orderly.
 - a) "If anyone speaks in a tongue, two--or at the most three--should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret." (1 Cor. 14:27 NIV)
 - b) I've been to a worship service where a whole group started speaking in tongues simultaneously. This is clearly not a scriptural teaching.
 - vi) Unless there is an interpreter present, the gift should only be used privately.
 - a) "If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and God." (1 Corinthians 14:28 NIV)
 - vii) It does "edify" a person to have the gift.
 - a) "He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself." (1 Corinthians 14:4a)
 - viii) Not everybody is given the gift of tongues. God gives people spiritual gifts as He sees fits. You can ask for the gift, but God has the right to say no.
 - a) "All these (the different spiritual gifts) are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines." (1 Corinthians 12:11 NIV)

- h) I'll end the "tongue" discussion with one of my favorite stories. Jon Courson, a Calvary Chapel pastor out of Oregon, had a men's retreat at a hotel in Lake Arrowhead, California. Like many hotels, they require a bartender/fully-stocked bar in any meeting room that is rented. During their conference, there was a time of prayer and praising of God. All of a sudden, one of the men started speaking in tongues. Jon Courson, cut him off, as there were no interpreters present. At the end of the day, the bartender walked up to Jon and informed him that the man speaking in tongues was speaking perfect Farsi (the Persian language), and that he himself was Persian. The bartender committed his life to Jesus based on that event.
- i) Okay, everybody, back to the story.
- 7. Back to Luke describing the events happening during Pentecost in Jerusalem. Verse 5: Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. ⁶ When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. ⁷ Utterly amazed, they asked: "Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? ⁸ Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? ⁹ Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome ¹¹ (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs--we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" ¹² Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"
 - a) So what drew the crowd, the wind-like sound, or the tongues?
 - i) I would speculate some of each. Being religious Jews (Verse 5), they were drawn to the Temple to see what this-noise-like sound was. It would be hard for them to hear the languages in another part of the city. I then speculate that the sound of the voices drew them directly to the apostles.
 - ii) Remember that wind carries sound. God used that combination to draw people toward the believers for Peter's sermon coming up.
 - b) Let's talk about this list of peoples.
 - i) "As was probably customary, the list includes both ancient kingdoms and current political entities, moving generally from east to west and in its middle section naming first the northern and then the southern lands." Expository Bible Encyclopedia.
 - ii) Notice "Judea" is smack dab in the middle. Judea is the home territory that includes Jerusalem, where this had taken place. I believe it is put in the middle somewhere to neither over-emphasize it nor ignore it.
 - a) Remember that the disciples were Galileans. This is the territory north of Judea.
 - (1) Although they spoke the same language, their accents were different.
 - iii) Luke makes the point that the visitors from Rome were Jews and Jewish converts in Verses 10-11. I suspect the reason was to distinguish them from Roman officials. If I said there were "visitors from Washington," your first assumption might be that it was either the President or Congressman. Therefore, this little commentary was added to make that distinction.
 - c) The most important line of the whole paragraph is the last. "What does this mean?"
 - i) These were religious people. People who were seeking answers from God.
 - ii) Peter is going to use this opportunity to preach a sermon.
 - iii) Keep that in mind the next time someone who has questions about God and your life asks you, "What does this mean?"
 - a) "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who *asks* [emphasis added] you to give the reason for the hope that you have." (1 Peter 3:15a)

8. Verse 13: Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."
 - a) There's a cynic in every group. Sometimes, when addressing a crowd, it is necessary to address the cynic as to not give credence and credibility to his arguments.
9. Here comes Peter, Verse 14: Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. ¹⁵ These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning!
 - a) I have seen many a drunk in my day, but Peter's right, I've never seen one at 9 am!
 - i) It was a good simple answer to the cynic.
 - b) Notice in Verse 14 it says Peter stood up with the Eleven. The NIV translation wisely translates "E"leven with a capital "E." There were probably more than just the apostles present.
 - i) Remember from Acts 1, Matthias was appointed by the 11 remaining "original" disciples to be the 12 Leaders of the church. This is the group that stood.
10. When you are addressing a group, and trying to give a persuasive speech, it is often best to start with what *everybody* has in common. The common belief, at this point, is that the entire audience was Jewish. Therefore, Peter starts his sermon with an Old Testament quote of the Book of Joel.
 - a) The quote is from the Book of Joel Chapter 2, Chapter Verses 28-31.
11. Acts, Chapter 2, Verse 16: No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: "'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. ¹⁸ Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. ¹⁹ I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. ²⁰ The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. ²¹ And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'
 - a) Okay, first question. Why this passage? Why not something from Moses or someone else?
 - i) Remember that the audience was looking for an explanation for what happened.
 - ii) Most religious Jews knew that the "wind" is a symbol for the spirit of God. In Hebrew, the same word "ru-wach" means both "spirit," "breath" and "wind."
 - b) Re-read Verses 17 and 18 from the point of view of a Jewish person, curious about what is happening. Here are all these strange signs of old men and young men (and women!) all speaking in strange signs from God.
 - i) Jewish people are not accustomed to "average" folks having special powers from God. Such powers were usually limited to leaders, the prophets, high priests, etc.
 - c) So here is Peter talking about "in the last days" all men/women, young and old will have special powers and visions.
 - i) That would be a (Jewish) logical explanation to the events that were taking place.
 - ii) I should also bring up the topic of "the last days." "The last days" is a biblical expression that goes from this chapter all the way until Christ's return.
 - a) It's hard for us to imagine "the last days" being a 2,000+ year period.
 - b) From God's eternal perspective, it *is* "the last days."
 - (1) If one takes a literal view of time from Adam to today, it is roughly 6,000 years. Some Christian and Jewish scholars speculate that God's timeframe is 6,000 years for man to exist, and then comes the 1,000-year millennium. Therefore, from God's perspective, these *are* the last days.
 - (2) That does *not* mean the rapture will happen on Adam's 6,000th birthday! It is a rough estimation and only one view. Remember, God says that no one knows the day or hour of the Lord's return. (Matthew 25:13, et al.)

12. It is important to understand the difference between the "last days" and the "day of the Lord."
 - a) The "day of the Lord" usually refers to the 7-year tribulation period.
 - b) The "last days" refers to the period from the birth of the church until Jesus returns.
 - c) This is important as you re-read verses 17-20. Go ahead, I'll wait. ☺
 - d) The subject of the verses changes in Verses 18-19.
 - i) Instead of talking about "visions and dreams," Joel is now talking about "signs in the heavens and earth." Such things as fire, blood, smoke, etc.
 - ii) There are 2 views. First, there is the "amillennialist" view. Revelation, chapter 20 mentions a 1,000-year period, (a millennium) where Christ reigns/rules for 1,000 years.
 - a) The Roman Catholic view, along with some Protestant churches, is that the 1,000-year period is *not* to be taken literally. In Greek, putting the letter "a" in front of a word is negative (like the English "non"). Amillennial means "no" millennium.
 - b) Therefore they see Peter's reading of Verse 19-20 as "spiritual" and happening all at the same time; that verses 19-20 were "fulfilled" at Pentecost.
 - iii) Most Protestant churches believe in a *literal* millennium that is future. The 1,000 years, as spoken of in Revelation 20, is to be literally fulfilled. Since we live *before* the millennium, this view is called "pre-millennium." The millennium takes place after the 7-year wrath period that is described through most of the Book of Revelation.
 - iv) Why am I going through all this?
 - a) Because if you take the pre-millennial view (I'm one of those)...
 - b) There is a 2,000-year "gap" between verses 18 and 19.
 - c) Is it okay to have a 2,000-year gap between verses?
 - d) Sure it is. My proof is Jesus himself. In Luke Chapter 4, Verses 18-19, Jesus is quoting from Isaiah 61:1. Jesus himself stops on a comma. That "comma" has lasted 2,000 years! After the "comma" in Isaiah, is "the day of vengeance," which has not happened yet. (I'd explain further, but I I'm running long. For further interest, compare the Luke and Isaiah passages.) The point is simply that there can be long gaps of time in Bible prophecy.
 - v) So, if verses 19-20 have nothing to do with explaining the "tongue thing," why did Peter include them?
 - a) Because he wanted people to hear the *next* verse, Verse 21...
 - (1) "And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."
 - b) Peter wanted to tie this whole prophecy that everyone (not just Jews), at this point, can call upon Jesus for salvation.
13. Peter explains this further much better than me. ☺

Verse 22: "Men of Israel, 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 set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

 - a) Peter now ties this event to the message about Jesus.
 - b) Notice Peter assumes the listener is already familiar with the events of Jesus' death and resurrection.
 - i) The events of Jesus' miracles, death, and crucifixion must have been common knowledge to the people of Israel.
 - ii) Remember that the religious Jews of that day *really* wanted a Messiah.
 - (1) Messiah simply means king.
 - b) The problem is that they wanted a Messiah to overthrow Rome.
 - c) They were not interested in a Messiah to die for their sins. They believed they were already saved because they were religious Jews.

- d) The same holds true today. Non-Christians accept Jesus as a great teacher and even a miracle worker. But their pride says, "I'm a good person. God will accept me as I am. I believe in God, isn't that good enough? I don't need someone to die for my sins."
- c) One of the great debate questions in history is, "Were the Jews responsible for Jesus' death?"
 - i) First of all, nothing happens in life that is not pre-ordained by God.
 - a) God *created* time. He exists *outside* of time.
 - b) We exist *inside* of time. Therefore, God holds us accountable for our actions.
 - ii) Jesus *knew* that his mission was to die for our sins, and He *believed* in the fact that God the father was going to resurrect Him.
 - a) Therefore, the "crime" of the Jews was the *rejection* of Jesus as the Messiah, not for first-degree murder.
 - b) I believe that is the point Peter is making.
 - c) I always liked the way Chuck Smith of Calvary Chapel put it: "If you want to blame somebody for the death of Jesus, blame *me*. He died for *my* sins."
- 14. Verse 24, Peter continues: 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.
 - a) The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is the key point to the whole Gospel story.
 - b) It is the *validation* that God the father accepted Jesus' death as payments for our sins.
 - i) Without the resurrection, we, as Christians, are truly "wasting our time."
 - ii) 1st Corinthians, Chapter 15, is often called "the resurrection" chapter.
 - a) It focuses on the essential *fact* of the resurrection as the key point to Christianity.
 - c) One should read the stories of the resurrection of Jesus, focusing on the *evidence*.
- 15. Back to the story. Because of Jesus' miracles, his reputation was well known in Israel at that time. I'm sure word also spread real fast that he was crucified. I'm further sure that many Israelites *hoped* he was the Messiah, again, to overthrow Rome. When he died on the cross, they gave up hope in Him. Peter's next job is to convince the Jewish audience that the resurrection was a *necessary fact* for the Messiah *and* was predicted in the Old Testament.
- 16. Peter continues, quoting Psalm 16:8-11: Verse 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 live in hope, ²⁷ because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you 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."
 - a) We, as Christians, don't always think of the Psalms as being "prophetic." We tend to just think of them as "praise poems."
 - i) Jesus himself said that the Psalms predicted aspects of his life.
 - a) He (Jesus) said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms [emphasis added]." (Luke 24:44 NIV)
 - b) The key point to this whole quote in the Psalms is in Verse 27: "nor will you let your Holy One see decay." When David was talking about "your Holy One," who was David talking about? He *could not* be referring to God the Father. How could God *decay*? He was either referring to the Messiah or himself. Let's read on.
- 17. Verse 29: "Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day.
 - a) The tomb of David was and is a landmark in Israel today. There is no physical evidence of the body-resurrection of David. That is Peter's point.
 - b) Peter *knew* that the listeners accepted the Psalms as being the Word of God. Yet here was this reference to "Your Holy One will not decay."

18. Verse 30: But he (David) was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne.
 - a) God made a direct promise to David. "When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever." (2 Samuel 7:12-13, NIV)
 - i) The word "forever" means just that. It was *meant* to be taken literally.
19. Peter continues, Verse 31: Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay. God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact.
 - a) Who is the "we" of "we are all witnesses of the fact"?
 - i) The Apostles, and those standing/sitting behind Peter.
 - ii) It wasn't just one guy who *thought* he saw Jesus alive again. It was the whole gang. Not just in one place. Various places. Various times.
 - iii) What would it take for you to think that a close personal friend was actually "God"? It's one thing to think a personal friend is a miracle worker, or even a king (Messiah). But to think him to be God-in-the-flesh, would take *a lot of convincing*.
 - iv) One of the great pieces of evidence that all of this is *truth*, is the fact that the people who knew Jesus, who lived with him and hung out with him, were all willing to leave their whole lives behind, with a strong possibility they'd be tortured to death (as most of them were), on the conviction that their close friend of 3 years had actually come to life again.
 - v) Listen to what the apostle John wrote near the end of his life, concerning Jesus. Ask yourself. Does this sound like "resurrected flesh" or a "spiritual being"?
 - a) "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched--this we proclaim concerning the Word of life." (1 John 1:1 NIV)
20. Okay, back to Peter talking about Jesus, post-resurrection. Verse 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.
 - a) Peter uses the Psalm prophecy to state that Jesus *was* resurrected and is now at the right hand of God (as he'll validate in Verse 34).
 - b) He further re-emphasizes that the promise of the Holy Spirit, as predicted by Joel (earlier verses) explains the "tongue" phenomena that everybody is seeing.
21. Quoting David again, quoting David in Psalm 110-1. Verse 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.'"

 - a) Here's a logical question. "The Lord said to my Lord." Who is the second "Lord" David is talking about? It has to be a reference to the Messiah.
 - i) Remember a few verses back Peter quoted Psalm 16 that said "I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand,..."
 - ii) We have the phrase "sit at my right hand" in both, Psalm 16 and Psalm 110.
 - iii) To a Jewish way of thinking and interpreting the Scriptures, when the same phrase is used twice, they tie together.
 - iv) Psalm 110 says "'The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand.'"
 - a) The second Lord is a reference to the Messiah.
 - v) Psalm 16 says "I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand,
 - vi) Peter is trying to pound the point home that when David says "I saw the Lord before me," he is *always* referring to Jesus (the Messiah), *not* God the Father.
 - vii) Peter is making the point that David's *belief in Jesus* is David's hope in the resurrection!

- viii) David's *next line* in Psalm 16 says:
 - a) Therefore *my* heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;
 - b) *My* body also will live in hope,
 - c) David got it. He understood the role of the Messiah.
 - d) *That* was his hope of the resurrection.
 - e) That is the point Peter is making by tying these two Psalms together.
- 22. Peter then wraps up his argument. Verse 36: "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."
- 23. Whenever you preach the Gospel, some people are going to get it. It is not *our* responsibility if people get it or not, it *is* our responsibility (collectively) to *preach it*. What God does assure us, is that one of the roles of the Holy Spirit is to convince people's hearts that the Gospel is the truth. Notice the results of Peter's sermon in the next verse.
 - a) Verse 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?"
 - b) You have to understand the guilt.
 - c) They have been waiting *centuries* for the Messiah.
 - d) They must have felt horrible. Maybe worried it was too late, and they were condemned to hell for blowing the opportunity. Peter's next job is to assure them it is not too late.
- 24. Verse 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."
 - a) Peter is giving the assurance that it is not too late. The promise of the resurrection is to *anyone*, this generation and every further generation to believe in Jesus. That is why Peter emphasized "and your children."
 - b) When a Jew thinks of "baptism," they associate it with non-Jews converting to Judaism.
 - i) It was a ritual to "change your way of thinking."
 - ii) This is also what "repent" means. It means to change your way of thinking. It means to make a commitment to a different lifestyle.
 - iii) Therefore, when Peter is telling Jews to "Repent and be baptized," it means starting new. Changing the way they *think* of Judaism. Being "born-again," as we call it.
- 25. Verse 40: Luke's commentary on the effectiveness of Peter's sermon: 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.
 - a) It's always interesting to contrast the "law" as given by Moses with the "age of grace" that is commenced in this Chapter.
 - b) When the Israelites made the "Golden Calf" in Exodus 32, 3,000 died because of that act.
 - c) When Peter made the first "alter-call for Christ," 3,000 people were saved.
- 26. The chapter ends with an epilogue comment by Luke on the early church formed by the 3,000, plus the early apostles. Verse 42: They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. ⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. ⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

- a) Many years ago, people took these verses as a "pro" argument for socialism.
 - a) If God is "pro-socialist/communist," why is one of the Ten Commandments, against stealing?
 - (1) How can you *steal* unless God condones personal possessions?
 - b) How could these people "break bread in *their* [emphasis added] homes" (Verse 46) and still be communistic?
 - ii) When you read the verses carefully, it does not say they sold everything they own. It just says they sold their possessions and goods to support each other.
 - a) It's the *attitude* of "if you are in need, let me help" that counts.
 - iii) I once heard of a church where, when they "passed the plate," the pastor gave this command: "Those who have something to give, please put in the plate. Those who are in need, please take from the plate." I am sure that is what is happening here.
 - b) You have to remember the practical side to all of this. To become a Jewish-Christian, one had to be "outcast" from the religious organization of that day. These people were probably ex-communicated from their synagogues, their families, friends, etc. for their belief in Jesus. They had to turn to each other for their survival.
 - i) This is common in many churches throughout history, and including today. There are many places where to be a Christian *today* is a crime. Christians must turn to each other for financial survival as well as spiritual survival.
 - ii) We, as Americans, tend to be *so* blessed that "faith" is not needed as much in this area.
 - iii) We take our freedom of religion for granted, and forget to praise God for this privilege.
27. The birth and growth of the early church will continue next time. Let's Pray. Father, we thank you of the lessons of the early church. We thank you for the Day of Pentecost, where "The age of grace" began. Where *you* decided, in your wisdom before time began, "to call a special people unto yourself." It is difficult for us to comprehend the love you have for us. That you pre-ordained centuries and centuries of history, all for the fact that you can call a special group of people, "the church," to all be with you forever. For that, we are forever grateful for what Jesus did for us, for the events that were laid out for us, and for the eternity we will spend with you. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.