

Peter's Bold Witness
Part 2

Bow in Prayer: “Our great God, we praise You for the power and work of Your Holy Spirit—for this special gift that You have bestowed on all who believe. Will You teach us the spiritual truths that allowed the early church to turn their world upside down—the very same truths that the modern church can use to transform our culture?”

On the Day of Pentecost, amid the confusion of so many languages being spoken at once, Peter found himself surrounded by a great many people who wanted to know what was going on. Before, Jesus had always handled these situations, but He wasn't with them in person anymore. In the midst of the crowd's bewilderment, Peter seized the moment and addressed the people.

Read Acts 2:14-36. Put yourself in the crowd that represented every nation who witnessed these supernatural events—and now Peter's sermon. ***Glance*** at Map 2 again for perspective.

1. With the other eleven apostles by his side, Peter began to tell the watching world about the work of God in their midst. But first, what brief rebuttal does he offer for the charge of drunkenness (2:15)?

Did you notice how Peter filled his sermon with rich Old Testament references? *Devout Jews would have carefully listened to all that Peter had to say (1 Peter 1:10-11).*

2. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Peter now explains the supernatural occurrences the multitude had witnessed earlier that day. (***Compare*** Acts 2:16-18 with Joel 2:28-29.) In what way does Joel's prophecy explain the miraculous proclamation of the Gospel of Christ to everyone in his or her own tongue (Acts 2:1-6)?

Note: The “last days” (2:17) include all the days between Christ's first and second comings.

When prophets like Joel speak for God it's not unusual to find a present fulfillment and a future fulfillment in their prophecy. The prophet does not always indicate an interval of time between events. This is the case with Joel's prophecy cited by Peter.

3. Which part of Joel's prophecy began to be fulfilled right then? Which part is still a future event? Explain your answer.

4. What bright hope does Joel's prophecy extend to people in every generation (verse 21)?

Beginning with Acts 2:22, Peter now moves from his explanation about the outpouring of the Spirit to a powerful and courageous witness about Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah.

5. What lines of evidence does Peter use to show that Jesus is their Messiah (verses 22-24)?
Reflect on these verses word by word, phrase by phrase before responding.

Note: The death of Jesus is attributed both to the sovereign purpose of God and to the wickedness of men. How can both be true? It has been suggested that divine sovereignty and human free will are like parallel railroad tracks that are often found side by side in Scripture and the tracks never come together on this side of eternity. When we enter glory, we will no doubt come to a fuller understanding of these biblical truths.

Peter's argument for the resurrection hinges on two Old Testament passages from the Psalms—passages his audience would have been familiar with. (See Acts 2:25-35.)

6. How do the statements made by King David in Psalm 16:8-11 and 110:1 bear witness to the risen Messiah? (Further explanation is given between the two citations in Acts 2:29-34.)

7. What is the relationship between Christ's resurrection and ascension to heaven; and His exaltation and the coming of the Spirit (verses 32-34)? Also see John 7:38-39.

Stop and Consider: There will always be those who misunderstand the work of God, who mock it and call into question its integrity. Christians can either wring their hands and worry or, like Peter, grab the opportunity to tell the watching world about the work of God in their midst.

8. Which path will you choose this week? Ask God to give you an open door to tell a friend or a stranger what God is doing in your life! Share with your group a clear example of God's supernatural intervention in your life recently.

The conclusion of Peter's argument is found in verse 36: "*God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.*" Through His resurrection Jesus demonstrated that He is the ever-living, life-giving God whom death cannot hold. This compelling argument becomes the basis of a direct appeal to all Israel. Many in the crowd would have been in Jerusalem 50 days before at Passover time when Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection took place, and some of them may have been a part of the mob that shouted "crucify Him!"

Read Acts 2:37-47. The crowd listened intently to everything Peter declared.

9. Describe the crowd's response to Peter's clear proclamation about Jesus and the truth that they put to death God's Messiah (verse 36-37).

The term "cut to the heart" speaks of genuine pain. It means to "strike, prick violently, sting sharply, stun."

10. Sum up Peter's reply and invitation to the great multitude in verses 38-40.

11. How would the people have felt when they heard they could be forgiven, even after crucifying Jesus?

Stop and Ponder: In the broader perspective of the plan of God, all people share the blame for Jesus' death. In a sense, all of us killed Jesus.

12. Is there any behavior in your life that might be affecting the credibility of your witness?
Lay your heart open before the Lord—be attentive to His voice.

13. What were the *spiritual* results of the outpouring of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost (verse 41)?

14. What *practical* results characterized the early church after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (verses 42-47)?

Connect: At the very outset the Holy Spirit gave the church a sense of common purpose and identity. This is a pattern of how the church ought to be. Like these early Christians we should have a spirit of wonder and anticipation about what God may do in us and through us. As you review the simple description of the early church think about some of the ways this community was connecting with one another.

15. What steps can you take to develop *close spiritual relationships (koinonia)* among the believers within your circle of influence?

Take a moment to reflect on all that you have explored thus far about the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts. Do you have questions about the Holy Spirit's role in your own life? Conclude by reading and reflecting on the handout about who the Holy Spirit is and what He does.

16. Then recount the most meaningful and helpful truths you have discovered about the Holy Spirit from our study thus far in the book of Acts.

Important Facts about the Holy Spirit

Acts 2:14-47 - Lesson 4

The Holy Spirit is a Person

There are three essential elements to personality: intellect, emotions, and will. The Holy Spirit possesses all three.

- * INTELLECT - I Corinthians 2:10-11 - “the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.” To search is an act of understanding and the Spirit is said to search because He knows.
- * EMOTIONS - Romans 15:30 - “I urge you brothers by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit” - He loves.
- * WILL - I Corinthians 12:11 - “All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and He gives them to each man, just as He determines.”
- * The Holy Spirit used personal pronouns when speaking of Himself (Acts 13:2).

Personal Acts Performed by the Holy Spirit

- * He is our Teacher - John 14:26.
- * He prays - intercedes for us - Romans 8:26.
- * He speaks - Acts 13:2, 4 (21 times in the NT).
- * He has fellowship with believers - 2 Corinthians 13:14; Philippians 2:1.
- * He convicts of sin - John 16:8-11.
- * He testifies - John 15:26.
- * He issues commands - Acts 8:29; 13:2-4; 16:6.
- * He is our Counselor and Helper - John 14:16, 26; 15:26. (Jesus said He would send “another Counselor” (*allos*) of the same kind as Himself - that is - personal.)
- * He glorifies Christ - John 16:14 (exhibits humility).

The Holy Spirit is susceptible to personal treatment

- * He can be tempted - Acts 5:9.
- * Lied to - Acts 5:3.
- * Grieved - Ephesians 4:30.
- * Resisted - Acts 7:51.
- * Insulted - Hebrews 10:29.
- * Blasphemed - Matthew 12:31, 32.

The Holy Spirit is God

- * Ephesians 2:22 - "A dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit."
- * Acts 5:3-4 - "lied to the Holy Spirit; you have not lied to men, but to God."
- * 2 Corinthians 3:17-18 - "Now the Lord is the Spirit." "The Lord who is the Spirit."

The Holy Spirit possess the attributes of Deity

- * Omnipresence - Psalm 139:7.
- * Omniscience - I Corinthians 2:10, 11.
- * All-Powerful - Luke 1:35.
- * Holy - John 16:7-14.
- * Eternal - Hebrews 9:14.
- * Truth - I John 5:6.

Works of Deity are ascribed to Him

- * Creation - The Spirit of God has made me - Job 33:4.
- * Inspiration of Scriptures - 2 Peter 1:21.
- * Regeneration - John 3:5.
- * The Raising of the Dead - Romans 8:11.