

**Acts 2:4-36 Teacher's Notes**  
**Peter's Pentecostal Preaching**  
**The Significance of Pentecostal Tongues**

**Introduction:** In today's text, we see Peter proclaim the Gospel. 3,000 came to faith as a result. *How as this possible? Why don't we see this today? What prior preparation went on before Peter's Pentecostal preaching?* (Rhetorical).

**\*\*\*\*What did Jesus promise shortly before His ascension (1:4-5)?** He promised they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

**\*\*\*\*Based on 1:8a, what is one important result of being baptized in the Holy Spirit?** The main result mentioned is power from the Holy Spirit to be Jesus' witnesses. This is exactly what happened when the Holy Spirit came upon them at Pentecost. They were supernaturally given the ability to speak in foreign languages.

**Reaction of the Multitude:** Upon hearing the sound of the disciples loudly proclaiming the mighty deeds of God in foreign languages, a crowd gathered in amazed astonishment. Some, however, mockingly said that they were drunk (2:13).

**Prior Preparation:** After the multitude gathered and had witnessed firsthand the miracles of tongues, Peter stood with the eleven other Apostles, lifted up his voice, and presented the Gospel. A felt need had been surfaced by the Holy Spirit. The multitude wanted to know how this was possible. Peter had their attention.

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**\*\*\*\*How did Peter account for the miracle of Pentecostal tongues (2:14-21)?<sup>1</sup>** Peter said it was the fulfillment of a Messianic prophecy made long before by the Old Testament prophet Joel (Joel 2:28-32), 2:16.

**1. According to 2:17, Joel's prophecy would be fulfilled in the "last days"; the last days of what?** It is common to understand the entire church age to be the last days, the time between the first and second coming of Jesus. However, it could refer instead to the last days of the Mosaic Covenant, the last days of the temple system, the last days of the Jewish age. The last days refers to the time overlap between Israel and the church (from A.D. 30 to A.D. 70), between the Old Covenant and the New. The first century church lived in the last days. We do not.<sup>2</sup>

**2. From an Old Testament perspective, what made Joel's prophecy so remarkable (2:17-18)?** In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit came upon people very selectively and infrequently and temporarily. Joel predicted a time when the Holy Spirit would liberally come upon all God's people

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<sup>1</sup> The other eleven apostles were standing with him. It was much like when the President speaks and other important government officials stand behind him in solidarity.

<sup>2</sup> Recommended Reading: *Last Days Madness: Obsession of the Modern Church* by Gary DeMar.

(sons and daughters, young and old men, and male and female servants).<sup>3</sup> Thus the rabbis understood Joel's prophecy to be a reference to the Messianic age.<sup>4</sup> Peter was, in effect, announcing the arrival of the Messianic age.<sup>5</sup>

**3. How were Joel's prophecies fulfilled about the blood, fire and smoke (2:19), the sun going dark and the moon turning to blood (2:20)?** *Compare Matthew 24:1-31.* None of this literally happened at Pentecost. However, it can be demonstrated from the Old Testament that this is the prophetic language of judgment and destruction. It is not to be taken strictly literally, but literarily. There is some amount of hyperbole that is symbolic for judgment.

Jesus said similar things regarding the coming destruction of the temple in A.D. 70.

ESV **Matthew 24:29** . . . the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

Again, Peter understood Joel's prophecy to refer to the "last days" (2:17) of Old Testament Judaism. The judgment both Jesus and Joel predicted came within their lifetimes, in A.D. 70. The beginning of the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy came with the out pouring of the Holy Spirit in A.D. 33 at Pentecost and the offer of salvation to all who would accept it. The completion of Joel's prophecy came with the destruction of the temple (when there really was blood, fire and smoke). One might even say the smoke darkened the sun and caused the evening sky to appear red against the moon.

**4. What is the day of the Lord (2:20)?** Throughout the Old Testament this prophetic phrase refers to a time of divine judgment.<sup>6</sup>

**5. What word of hope did Peter offer in 2:21?** *See Acts 4:12, Romans 10:9-13.* Despite the terrible judgment that was coming, salvation was possible. Whoever would call on the name of the Lord would be saved. The promise is not that everyone will be saved. The promise is that everyone who calls in the name of the Lord will be saved. A few chapters later Peter said:

ESV **Acts 4:12** . . . there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

Paul quoted this same verse from Joel in his letter to the Romans:

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<sup>3</sup> In the Old Testament we see women with the gift of prophecy. However, prophecy is not the same spiritual gift as teaching nor it is the same as preaching.

<sup>4</sup> *ESV Study Bible*, 2084.

<sup>5</sup> Some argue that the firm establishment of the church along with the completion of the Scriptures removed the need for continued prophetic revelation to the extent seen in the first century. However, if prophecy is still a functioning gift, then New Testament guidelines for judging it must also be followed (1Jn 4:1, 1Co 14:29, 1Th 5:20-22).

<sup>6</sup> The day of the Lord is not to be confused with the Lord's Day (Sunday), which is a completely different construction in the Greek.

ESV **Romans 10:9-13** . . . if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved . . . For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

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**\*\*\*\*What words did Peter call upon the men of Israel to hear (2:22-28)?** Peter declared that Jesus was clearly a man of God and he then accused his hearers being the ones who killed Jesus via the Romans. Peter then gave Scriptural proof that Jesus had risen from the dead.

**6. How did Peter describe Jesus in 2:22?** Peter described Jesus as a man from the city of Nazareth who was attested to by God with mighty works, wonders, and signs from God.<sup>7</sup> This proved that Jesus was a legitimate spokesman for God and not a charlatan.<sup>8</sup>

**7. How can both God's sovereignty and man's responsibility be seen in 2:23?** Even though Jesus was killed by a sinful act of his own people, it was all according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God. Here we see an example of where God's sovereignty and human responsibility come together.

God sovereignly used man's sinful free will choices to accomplish God's plan. God's sovereignty does not absolve us of responsibility for our actions. Man certainly does have a free will and does actually and truly make decisions and choices. We freely choose what we want. We are not robots. The problem is that natural man is biased toward sin. Our choices are sinful choices. Our wills are not neutral. Our desires are wicked; we are dead in sin and walk according to the course of this world. A natural man's decisions are made within the context of a jail of his own sinful inclinations and impulses. That's why we are in trouble with God. Thus Charles Wesley's hymn: "Long my imprisoned spirit lay Fast bound in sin and nature's night; Thine eye diffused a quickening ray, I woke, the dungeon flamed with light; My chains fell off, my heart was free, I rose, went forth, and followed Thee."

**8. What is God's foreknowledge (2:23)?** The Greek is *prognosis*, transliterated into the medical term prognosis. A doctor can examine one's medical condition and make a prognosis about the outcome. The doctor knows from experience what will happen but the doctor does not cause it to happen. It is tempting to say the same about God, but God's foreknowledge is not the same as a doctor's foreknowledge.

**What is the difference between a doctor's prognosis and God's prognosis?** The difference is the omnipotence of God and the impotence of the doctor. A doctor knows from experience what course a disease will take. However, the doctor does not cause the disease to progress and often

<sup>7</sup> Peter said Jesus did all these things "in your midst, as you yourselves know" (2:22). This indicates his hearers were residents of Jerusalem and not simply visiting pilgrims.

<sup>8</sup> Though Jesus was Jehovah God in human flesh, it is interesting that Peter did not, at this point, introduce the idea of Jesus' deity. Rather, Peter concentrated on the ways God affirmed Jesus' life and teachings. On the other hand, Luke only recorded a portion of Peter's message. It is possible Peter went into more detail about Jesus' identity than Luke chose to chronicle. Luke tells us that Peter bore witness with many other words besides the few recorded here, 2:40.

can do little to change the prognosis. God, however, has complete control over everything. Even when God allows sinful men to do sinful things, God has the ability to stop the sin and change the outcome. If He lets it happen it is because it is God's will for it to happen. Ultimately, nothing happens apart from God's will. *What God foreknows God has foreordained.* Otherwise, God is not God.

**9. Technically, it was the Jewish leaders, not the common people, who conspired to have Jesus killed. In what sense did those listening to Peter crucify Jesus (2:23)?** On a personal level, Jesus had just concluded a three year long public ministry in Judea, complete with miracles. These people had many opportunities to believe in Jesus, but they either rejected Him or put off considering His claims. On a federal level, in as much as the leadership represented the whole nation, the common people were responsible. In much the same way, all people are guilty of original sin — Adam's sin — because he was our federal head, representing us.

**In what sense were Jesus' killers lawless (2:23)?** See *1 Corinthians 9:20-21*. This is a reference to the Romans, who carried out the crucifixion. From a Jewish perspective, all Gentiles were without law because they were not part of the Mosaic covenant when God's Law came down from Mount Sinai.

**What reason did Peter give—just in 2:24—as to why God raised up Jesus from the dead?** The reason Peter gave was because it was not possible for him to be held by death.

**10. In 2:25-28, what Scriptural proof did Peter offer as to why was not possible for Jesus to be held by death (2:24)?** The proof Peter offered was a Psalm of David (Ps 16) that stated God's Holy One would not be abandoned to Hades nor allowed to undergo corruption. Peter then went on to exegete David's Psalm and prove that it could not have referred to King David.

**What is Hades (2:27)?** Not to be confused with Hell, Hades simply refers to the realm of the dead. For righteous people Hades was Paradise. For wicked people Hades was torment. Jesus died and went to Hades, but he did not remain there! As the angel said to the women who went to Jesus' tomb:

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**\*\*\*\*11. How did Peter prove that David's Psalm had to be about the Christ rather than about David himself (2:29-36)?** David's Psalm promised that God's Holy One would not see corruption (i.e., die and have his corpse decompose). Peter pointed out that David not only died but that his occupied tomb was still there, 1000 years later, as Peter was preaching. David's body saw corruption. David's soul remained in Hades. This proves the Psalm did not refer to David himself. Instead, as a prophet David wrote the Psalm about the coming Christ, who would conquer death (2:29-32).<sup>9</sup>

**12. What did God's oath to set one of David's descendants on his throne have to do with David's Psalm (2:30)?** See *2:31, Psalm 89:3-4*. God promised David that one of his descendants

<sup>9</sup> The location of the tomb has since been lost.

would rein on the throne forever. David understood that special descendant would be the Messiah, Jesus. Thus David foresaw Jesus' resurrection.

ESV **Psalm 89:3-4** . . . I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant: 'I will establish your offspring forever, and build your throne for all generations.'

**What fact did Peter drive home in 2:32?** God raised Jesus from the dead. Peter and the eleven were witnesses to it (2:14) to that fact. Matthias had been selected as a replacement for Judas so that he could serve as a witness to the resurrection. The resurrection is the key to everything:

ESV **Romans 1:4** [Jesus] was declared to be the Son of God in power . . . by his resurrection from the dead . . .

ESV **Romans 10:9**. . . believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

**13. What theological truth did Peter draw from the Pentecostal tongues (2:33-35)?** The multitudes had witnessed the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in fulfillment of Joel's prophecy. Peter said this proved that Jesus **1)** was the Christ and **2)** had ascended to the right hand of God, just as David predicted (2:34-25).<sup>10</sup>

**What application did Peter call for in 2:36?** He called for all Jews hearing him to know for certain that God made Jesus both Lord and Christ.

**14. God made Jesus both Lord and Christ (2:36). Christ is the Greek way to say Messiah. In what sense did God also make Jesus Lord (2:36)?** See *Psalm 110:1*. At a fundamental level, lord is a title of respect. Beyond that it means boss or owner or master. As the Christ, Jesus is entitled to both respect and He has authority over God's people. He is far from being an insurrectionist who deserved scorn, ridicule, and crucifixion. Peter does clearly proclaim Him to be the resurrected Messiah who has ascended to the highest position in the universe (the right hand of God the Father).

**15. With what hard words did Peter end his declaration (2:36)?** Peter pointed out that they had crucified their own Messiah! Peter was faithful to apply the truth to his hearers. He did not hold back the full diagnosis.

ESV **Acts 20:26-27** Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all of you, for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.

**Application:** In dealing with other people, sooner or later we must point out their personal sinfulness, culpability and need for forgiveness. It is so easy to not say anything!

### So What?

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<sup>10</sup> **Trinity:** In 2:33 all three persons of the Trinity are seen: God the Father, Jesus ascended to the Father's right hand, and the Holy Spirit sent by Jesus in all His fullness to indwell the Church.

**16. What truths were dealt with in today's passage that you need to act on?**

\*\*\*\* = ask this question before reading the text aloud. Doing so will cause focus.

- These lessons are designed for a 45 minute session and are based on the text of the ESV.
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