



Almont Vineyard Church

Baptism Sunday- "What Shall We Do?"

September 26, 2026

Opening Monologue

Welcome to the opening monologue for this week's sermon. As you continue to scroll, you will find spiritual applications, commentary, and deeper discussion on the message. There are many features in the app, so please dive in and go deeper into God's Word.

This is an exciting week as we celebrate Baptism Sunday! Many people have said yes to Jesus—the most important decision anyone can make on this earth. Let that sink in. Accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior is the most important decision a person can make. Praise God for His salvation!

This week's sermon will be shorter, but it is a power punch from Acts chapter 2. The title of the sermon is What Shall We Do? All of us have been there—when something dramatic happens, and in that moment, we say in our minds, or quite frankly right out loud, "What are we going to do?" (I tell a story about this in my Sermon) Acts chapter 2 records that exact question. About 3,000 people said in their hearts and with their mouths, "What shall we do?" They had gathered in the holy city of Jerusalem for Pentecost, the celebration of the harvest. And as God had planned, an outpouring of the Holy Spirit took place. In that moment Peter—the disciple upon whom Jesus said He would build His church—stood up and preached a bold sermon.

The people were cut to the heart. They were convicted, they repented of their sins, and they gave their lives to Jesus Christ. The same question is in front of us today: What shall we do?

Acts 2:36–38 "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" 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."

Come join us this Sunday as we hear God's Word, are encouraged and equipped, and celebrate multiple people being baptized.

In Christ,
Rev. Pastor Brad

To Listen to this week's Sermon: "Baptism Sunday/ What Shall We Do?" Go to the Sermon tab here in our APP or use the links to our website or YouTube Channel where you can also listen to our Sermons:

Web: <https://www.almontvineyardchurch.org/media>

You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/@almontvineyardchurch>

Key Sermon Text

Acts 2:1-37

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%202%3A1-37&version=NIV>

Spiritual Reflection

When Should I Get Baptized?

Scripture establishes a consistent pattern: faith precedes baptism. When people believed Philip's preaching about God's kingdom and Jesus Christ, they were baptized (Acts 8:12–13). Crispus believed in the Lord along with his household, and many Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptized (Acts 18:8). This sequence—belief first, then water baptism—appears repeatedly throughout Acts.

Peter commanded the crowd at Pentecost to repent and be baptized in Jesus' name for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38), establishing repentance as the prerequisite. The New Testament pattern is this: God's Word is preached; those who hear respond in repentance and faith; then the responsive believers are baptized after confessing faith in Jesus. This ordering matters theologically.

The physical act itself carries profound symbolic weight. Immersion—complete submersion in water—symbolizes being buried with Christ, representing the death and burial of the old way of life. Coming up from the water symbolizes resurrection to new life with Christ and the promise of future bodily resurrection (Romans 6:3–4). Water baptism identifies believers with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. It is a public profession of faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Baptism is neither the means of God's saving grace nor the means by which a person is born again. Rather, baptism represents identification with Christ. It illustrates what has already happened in the heart: a believer's union with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. The confession of faith—the inward reality—precedes and calls for the outward expression of baptism.

Scriptural Support

In the New Testament, water baptism regularly follows repentance and faith in Jesus. The passages below are grouped for teaching and study.

The Pattern Stated

- **Acts 2:38** — “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.” (NIV)
- ** Acts 2:41** — “Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.”
- **Mark 16:16** — “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”

(Longer ending of Mark; many Bibles note the manuscript question. Even so, the order is believe, then baptize.)

- ** Matthew 28:19–20** — Make disciples... baptizing them... teaching them. Discipleship and faith come first; baptism is the next step.

Narratives: they believed, then they were baptized

These are the clearest “after they accepted Christ” accounts:

- **Acts 8:12–13** — Samaritans “believed Philip as he preached the good news... and were baptized,” men and women. Simon also “believed and was baptized.”

- **Acts 8:35–38** — The Ethiopian eunuch hears the gospel about Jesus, asks what hinders baptism, confesses faith, and is baptized.

- **Acts 9:17–18** — Saul meets the risen Lord, receives sight, then “got up and was baptized.”

The same event is retold in Acts 22:16: “And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.”

- **Acts 10:43–48** — Cornelius’s household hears that “everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins.” The Spirit falls on those who believed; Peter then commands them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

- ** Acts 16:14–15** — The Lord opens Lydia’s heart to respond to Paul’s message; then she and her household are baptized.

- **Acts 16:30–34**— The jailer asks, “What must I do to be saved?” Paul says, “Believe in the Lord Jesus.” He and his household hear the word, believe, and are baptized that same night.

- **Acts 18:8** — “Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized.”

- **Acts 19:1–5** — Disciples in Ephesus who had only John’s baptism hear about Jesus, believe, and are baptized “into the name of the Lord Jesus.”

Teaching that assumes baptism belongs to believers

These do not narrate a conversion, but they tie baptism to those who already have faith in Christ:

- Romans 6:3–4 — We were baptized into Christ Jesus... into His death, then raised to walk in new life.

- Galatians 3:26–27 — “You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.”

- Colossians 2:12 — “having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God.”

- 1 Peter 3:21 — Baptism saves “not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God.” It is an appeal that comes from a believing heart.

John’s baptism: repentance first, then water

This is not yet Christian baptism in Jesus’ name, but the same order appears:

- Matthew 3:5–6, 11 — They confessed their sins and were baptized. John: “I baptize you with water for repentance.”

- Mark 1:4–5 — “a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.”

- Luke 3:3, 7–8 — Baptism of repentance; fruit in keeping with repentance is required.

- Acts 13:24 — John “preached repentance and baptism to all the people of Israel.”

- Acts 19:4 — “John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus.”

What the list shows

Again and again the sequence is:

- 1.The gospel is preached.
- 2.People repent and believe in Jesus as Lord and Christ.
- 3.They are baptized in water in His name.

Acts never shows the church baptizing people who have not first responded to Christ. The command in Acts 2:38 and the stories that follow it are the backbone of that claim.

Sources: 3-4

What Happened in Acts Chapter 2

When Pentecost arrived, Jerusalem was packed. People from all over the Roman world—and even from beyond it—had come into the holy city. Luke names about fourteen or fifteen peoples and regions: Parthians, Medes, Elamites, residents of Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, Libya near Cyrene, visitors from Rome, Cretans, and Arabs (Acts 2:9–11). They came expecting what they had celebrated for generations: Pentecost, the Feast of Weeks, the harvest festival. There was anticipation, excitement, the greeting of friends, and joy over what God had done for His people.

Some of them had traveled an enormous distance to get there.

Region (Acts 2) Approximate distance to Jerusalem Typical travel

Parthia / Media / Elam 700–1,100 miles 1–2+ months overland

Rome 1,400–1,900 miles about 3 weeks by sea

Cyrene / Libya about 1,000 miles about 2 weeks by sea

Pontus 800–1,200 miles 5–8 weeks

Mesopotamia 550–850 miles 4–8 weeks overland

Cappadocia about 650 miles 3–5 weeks

Crete about 800 miles about 10 days by sea

Asia / Phrygia 500–700 miles 2–3 weeks

Egypt 300–400 miles 1–2 weeks

Pamphylia 400–500 miles about 1 week by sea

Arabia 100–200 miles several days

Judea local hours to a few days

Little did they know that Jesus had told His disciples to stay in the city and wait until they were “clothed with power from on high” (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4–8). What God was about to do would fulfill a word spoken long before through the prophet Joel: that in the last days He would pour out His Spirit on all people (Joel 2:28–32).

What happened next took everyone by shock and amazement. The believers were gathered together when a sound like a violent wind filled the house. Divided tongues as of fire appeared and rested on each of them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit enabled them (Acts 2:1–4). Devout Jews from every nation heard the commotion and came running. Each one heard the disciples declaring the mighty works of God in his own native language. They were bewildered and amazed. “Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans?” they asked. “Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language?” (Acts 2:5–12).

Not everyone understood what they were hearing. Some were perplexed. Others mocked and said the disciples were drunk on new wine (Acts 2:13).

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven and preached a sermon that would mark the rest of the New Testament. He began by answering the mockers: these men are not drunk, he said; it is only nine in the morning. This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel—“In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people” (Acts 2:14–21; Joel 2:28–32).

From there Peter pointed the crowd to Jesus. Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to them by miracles, wonders, and signs. He was handed over by God’s set purpose and foreknowledge, and they, with the help of wicked men, put Him to death by nailing Him to the cross. But God raised Him from the dead. Death could not keep its hold on Him. David had spoken of this resurrection: God would not abandon the Holy One to the grave. This Jesus, Peter said, God has raised up, and we are all witnesses of the fact. Exalted to the right hand of God, He has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what they now see and hear. Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:22–36).

That last sentence landed. Scripture says the people were cut to the heart. In other words, they were convicted. They had put Jesus to death and overlooked God’s plan of redemption and salvation. They said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37).

Peter answered with the gospel call that still stands: “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. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call” (Acts 2:38–39). They confessed their sin, they repented, and they put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ. Those who accepted the message were baptized, and about three thousand were added that day (Acts 2:41).

Peter’s sermon became the bridge between the supernatural event and the listeners’ need for repentance. The wind, the fire, and the languages were not a spectacle for their own sake. They were the visible and audible evidence that God had acted decisively through Jesus Christ—the crucified and risen Lord—and that the promised Spirit had been poured out on all flesh. The harvest they had come to celebrate turned out to be a harvest of souls. The same question is still in front of us: What shall we do?

Sources: 5

Commentary on Main Texts

Acts 2

THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES

In Old Testament times, the Spirit of God came upon isolated individuals or smaller groups only on special occasions and only in a temporary way to help them accomplish God’s purposes (Exodus 31:3; Judges 14:6; 1 Samuel 16:13). As the apostles were gathered together in Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost, the time had come for the fulfillment of Christ’s promise to send his Spirit completely and permanently upon all believers (Luke 24:49; John 14:16–17, 26; 16:5–15). This marvelous outpouring of God provided the supernatural power for believers to take the life-changing message of the gospel to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). This is the day Christ made good on his promise to send the Helper, the Comforter, the Holy Spirit who would take up

permanent residence in those who put their faith in Christ. And what a day it was! God's individualized pouring out of his Spirit into the lives of 120 believers resulted in the effective pouring out of his story, changing the lives of three thousand people in one day!

2:1 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place.

The day of Pentecost was an annual feast celebrated on "the day after the seventh Sabbath" after Passover (Leviticus 23:15–16). Since the date was determined by the passing of a "week" of weeks (seven weeks), it was often called the Feast of Weeks. The word "Pentecost" means "fifty," so named because this feast was celebrated fifty days after Passover. It was originally the Feast of the Firstfruits of the grain harvest. By this time Jews had associated Pentecost with the giving of the Law (Torah) at Mount Sinai. Pentecost was one of three major annual feasts celebrated by the Jews (along with Passover, fifty days earlier, and the Feast of Tabernacles about four months later). Jesus was crucified at Passover time, and he ascended forty days after his resurrection. The Holy Spirit came fifty days after the Resurrection, ten days after the Ascension. The identification of Pentecost with "firstfruits" likely has a real significance here, since the three thousand who came to faith in Christ this day were the "firstfruits" of many thousands who would follow.

Those gathered were the 120 believers mentioned in 1:15. The one place where they were gathered was likely the same upper room mentioned in 1:13. Most likely the believers were praying, as had been their regular practice during the period since the Ascension (1:14). What happened this day would forever change the world.

2:2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. Suddenly, as the believers were gathered, they heard a sound or noise like the blowing of a violent wind (it was not necessarily movement of air, but perhaps a sound like that of wind). The word for "wind" (pnoēs) is similar in sound and spelling to the word for "spirit" (pneuma). The wind is a good analogy for the Spirit: it is not seen, though its effects are, and it can be found everywhere in never-ending supply. Some have made the connection here between this event and the dry bones of Ezekiel 37:1–14 as well as the discussion between Jesus and Nicodemus (John 3:8), where Jesus compared the Spirit to the wind. Jews believed that the wind of God's Spirit would precede and announce the coming of the messianic age. The source of this sound is made clear: it came from heaven. It would affect everyone, for it filled the whole house where they were sitting. The "house" probably refers to the upper room mentioned in 1:13 where the believers had been meeting and praying.

2:3 Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them.

To the great sound of wind was added a visual image: what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. Why tongues of fire? It may be that "tongues" symbolized speech and the communication of the gospel. "Fire" symbolizes God's purifying presence, which burns away the undesirable elements in people's lives and sets their hearts aflame to ignite the lives of others. On Mount Sinai, God confirmed the validity of the Old Testament law with fire from heaven (Exodus 19:16–18). Elsewhere in the Old Testament, fire was used to portray the presence of God (Genesis 15:17; Exodus 3:2–6; 13:21–22; 24:17; 40:38; see also Life Application Bible Commentaries, Matthew and Luke, notes in Matthew 3:11 and Luke 3:16). John said that Jesus would baptize the people with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

"BAPTISM IN THE SPIRIT" IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The term (or concept) occurs only a few times in the New Testament. It is used in basically three different ways.

PROPHETIC HISTORICAL DOCTRINAL

Matthew 3:11 (Acts 2:1–4) 1 Corinthians 12:13

Mark 1:8 Acts 11:15–17 (Romans 6:1–4)

Luke 3:16

John 1:33

Acts 1:5

- In the Gospels, John the Baptist used the term in describing Jesus' ministry.
- In Acts 1:5, Jesus quotes John's prophecy looking forward to Pentecost.
- In Acts 2, the process was initiated on the day of Pentecost: the Holy Spirit came to make the church his residence, indwelling every believer.
- In Acts 11:16 the term is used by Peter who referred to Jesus' quote of John's prophecy.
- In Romans 6:1–4 and 1 Corinthians 12:13 Paul taught its significance.

At Pentecost God confirmed the validity of the Holy Spirit's ministry by sending fire. And while at Mount Sinai fire had come down on one place, at Pentecost fire came down on many believers, symbolizing that God's presence is available to all who believe in him. This event certainly fulfilled John the Baptist's words about the Holy Spirit baptizing with fire (Luke 3:16). Peter declared that this event had been prophesied by Joel (Joel 2:28–29). Note, too, that every believer in the room received this blessing; no one was excluded. It was clear to all present that God was at work.

O Thou who camest from above The pure celestial fire to impart, Kindle a flame of sacred love On the mean altar of my heart! Jesus, confirm my heart's desire To work, and speak, and think for Thee; Still let me guard the holy fire, And still stir up Thy gift in me. — John Wesley

2:4 And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability.

At this point in this wonderful scene, Luke recorded that everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages. The “filling” that occurred on Pentecost is called a “baptizing” (1:5 and 11:16) and a “receiving” (10:47). “Baptizing” or “filling” can be used to describe the basic act of receiving the Spirit. It can be understood to refer to the first occurrence of the Spirit's indwelling a believer. Acts 1:5 looks forward to this day; Acts 11:15–16 refers back to it. Here, four short verses record it.

In principle, the filling of the Holy Spirit can be distinguished from the term “baptism” of the Spirit. “Baptism” is the theological, objective term referring to the Spirit's initial work in a believer's life, beginning the relationship, and—like water baptism—is not a repeated act (Acts 11:15–16; Romans 6:3; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Colossians 2:12). The believer who has taken this initial step of Spirit baptism must, however, continue to take advantage of the Spirit's active work in his or her life. That phenomenon is described in the New Testament as the Spirit's filling (see Acts 4:8, 31; 6:3, 5; 7:55; 9:17; 13:9, 52; Galatians 5:16; Ephesians 4:30; 5:18).

Note on Holy Spirit

The filling with the Spirit differs fundamentally from baptism—while there is one baptism, the infilling occurs repeatedly throughout a believer's life.¹ Spirit-fullness in the New Testament is emphasized as a recurring necessity.² The apostles themselves demonstrate this pattern: Peter and Paul were each Spirit-filled but received fresh fillings for special situations², and the Early Church community, which was filled initially at Pentecost, was refilled later.²

The filling differs from indwelling—the Spirit’s baptism is that initial act at regeneration by which believers are incorporated into Christ’s body, with the Spirit taking up residence within them.¹ However, all Christians have been baptized with the Spirit, yet this doesn’t mean they are always fully yielded to the Spirit or always filled with the Spirit.³ There is a difference between possessing the Spirit and being filled with the Spirit—all Christians have the first; not all have the second, although all may have.¹

Scripture commands ongoing filling: Paul’s grammar in Ephesians 5:18 clearly says, “be constantly being filled with the Holy Spirit.”⁴ The verb tense is present, meaning believers must be continually filled with the Spirit.³ Whenever believers are called upon for special service or face new emergencies, they should seek a fresh infilling of the Spirit, either for life or service.¹ Being filled with the Spirit is intended to be the continual state of the Christian, and Christians are meant to be progressively filled with the Spirit, though this state can be lost through disobedience and regained via repentance.⁵

At Pentecost (2:1–4), the Holy Spirit was made available to all who believe in Jesus. Believers receive the Holy Spirit (are baptized with him) when they trust in Jesus Christ for salvation. The baptism of the Holy Spirit must be understood in the light of his total work in Christians:

- The Spirit marks the beginning of the Christian experience. No one belongs to Christ without his Spirit (Romans 8:9); no one is united to Christ without his Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:17); no one is adopted as God’s child without his Spirit (Romans 8:14–17; Galatians 4:6–7); no one is in the body of Christ except by baptism in the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13).
- The Spirit is the power for the new life. He begins a lifelong process of change as believers become more like Christ (Galatians 3:3; Philippians 1:6). Those who receive Christ by faith begin an immediate personal relationship with God. The Holy Spirit works in them to help them become like Christ.
- The Spirit unites the Christian community in Christ (Ephesians 2:19–22). The Holy Spirit can be experienced by all, and he works through all (1 Corinthians 12:11; Ephesians 4:4).

Was this phenomenon the birthday of the church? Some think this was the inauguration day for the church, whereby the Spirit made the church into a corporate body (1 Corinthians 12:13). Most likely the church did not begin at Pentecost but at the time of Christ’s resurrection. The Spirit of the risen Christ began a new, more intense relationship with individual believers than ever before. The promise of John 14:17 that the Spirit “will be in you” was fulfilled. As a new instrument of service called into action with the mission Israel formerly had, the church did have its birthday at Pentecost. It was the beginning of a time of rapid growth for the church.

These people literally spoke in “other languages” (see comments on the following verse)—a miraculous attention getter for the international crowd gathered in town for the feast. All the nationalities represented recognized their own languages being spoken. Jews believed that spoken prophecy had ceased with Malachi, the last of the writing prophets. They believed that from that point on, God spoke through the Torah as interpreted by scholars and teachers. So this was truly a remarkable day for the church, fulfilling Ezekiel 37:11–14.

The believers could speak in these other languages because the Holy Spirit gave them this ability. This is the clear teaching of the New Testament—that the Holy Spirit sovereignly determines which gift(s) a believer will have (1 Corinthians 12:7, 11). Furthermore, these gifts are meant to be used to build up the body of Christ.

2:5–8 Godly Jews from many nations were living in Jerusalem at that time.

When they heard this sound, they came running to see what it was all about, and they were bewildered to hear their own languages being spoken by the believers. They were beside themselves with wonder. “How can

this be?” they exclaimed. “These people are all from Galilee, and yet we hear them speaking the languages of the lands where we were born!” Such an event could not help but attract attention, and a crowd must have quickly gathered. The godly Jews from many nations who were living in Jerusalem at that time were the Jews among the Diaspora (the Greek word for “scattering”), whose families had been driven from Jerusalem and forced to live in other nations but had since returned to Jerusalem to live. These people had been born and raised in other nations, so among them many different languages were spoken. Thus, they were bewildered to hear their own languages being spoken—languages of the lands where they were born. As the international, multilingual crowd gathered, they were astonished to hear their native tongues spoken by these Galileans. The term for “their own languages” is *dialektō*, from which we get our English word “dialect.” These were spoken, living languages. At this point, “tongues” was not the ecstatic or heavenly utterance to which Paul referred in 1 Corinthians 12–14; these were languages people understood.

This gathering of the nations was a perfect platform for launching the worldwide mission of the church. This event told the Jerusalem church that God intended the gospel for all the nations in their own languages.

2:9–11 “Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!”

This list includes the many lands from which Jews came to Jerusalem—some living in Palestine and others who had been dispersed throughout the world through captivities and persecutions. The list begins from the east of the Roman Empire and sweeps to the south and west. Very likely, some of the Jews who responded to Peter’s message then returned to their homelands with God’s good news of salvation (for example, see Acts 8).

Through this divine manifestation of languages, therefore, God prepared the way for the spread of the gospel across the world. Throughout the book of Acts, it is clear how often the way was prepared for Paul and other messengers by people who had become believers at Pentecost. The church at Rome, for example, was probably begun by such Jewish believers. The list of countries reads mostly from East to West geographically, but why they are cited and why in this order is not known.

The Jews gathered in Jerusalem came from many nations, and each person heard the disciples speaking in their own language (Acts 2:1–13)—not a single universal tongue, but the specific dialects and languages of their homelands.

Here’s the linguistic reality: The languages spoken at Pentecost may have been varied dialects of Greek and Aramaic, especially the latter, since Diaspora Jews primarily spoke Greek or Aramaic. However, this doesn’t diminish the miracle. Dialects can vary so greatly that they practically amount to different languages as far as speaking communication is concerned. A Jew from Egypt would speak Egyptian Greek differently than one from Rome; someone from Mesopotamia spoke Aramaic with regional variations distinct from Palestinian Aramaic.

The miracle’s genius lies in its scope. Many parts of the ancient world where Jews had settled were only superficially Hellenized, and native pagan dialects were spoken there, so a miracle of speaking was necessary to cover these varied dialects, to say nothing of distinct languages that may have been represented. These diaspora Jews were perhaps bilingual, speaking both Greek and their native languages, and were dumbfounded to hear Galilean Jews speaking the languages of peoples surrounding the Mediterranean Sea. The power wasn’t in one miraculous translation—it was that the disciples used the actual languages of people

present who otherwise would have been incapable of hearing the gospel, and they did so despite being unfamiliar with those languages themselves. Each person heard the proclamation of God's mighty works in the language they grew up speaking—their mother tongue.

The content of these speeches in each language was the wonders of God. The subject of discussion was not sin, repentance, judgment, not even the gospel, but rather the proclamation of the mighty works of God.

Some have called this event at Pentecost “Babel Reversed.” They speculate that God seems to be saying: “I confused your languages thousands of years ago because you failed to obey me, but now I’ve got a message so important, I’ll countermand that program to get this message out.”

The important fact to remember about this first occurrence of “tongues” is its purpose: to get the message of Christ out to the world. It was a sign for unbelieving Israel that the Messiah had come. The promised Spirit had been poured out as foretold in Joel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and others. It was also an effective sign for the propagation of the gospel message—an instant, Spirit-given gift of a foreign language with which to spread the glorious news of God's work in the world. And that is exactly the point of Pentecost. The faithful believers were waiting and praying. Then came the prophesied signal that something big was about to happen. When it occurred, God delivered his message to the world.

With all the misinformation available today, many believers tend to look at Pentecost in an entirely improper light. It is often viewed as only some tremendous outpouring of power—sound of wind, fire, signs and wonders. If believers will take a fresh and straight-forward look at the events of Pentecost, however, they will find that the focus is on the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy and the beginning of the witness of the apostles to the world.

THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE GOSPEL

Christianity is not limited to any race or group of people. Christ offers salvation to all people, without regard to nationality. People in Jerusalem were shocked to hear the apostles and other believers speaking in languages other than their own, the languages of other nationalities, but they need not have been surprised. God works all kinds of miracles to spread the gospel, using many languages as he calls all kinds of people to become his followers. No matter what your race, color, nationality, or language, God speaks to you. Are you listening for his voice?

2:12–13 They stood there amazed and perplexed. “What can this mean?” they asked each other. But others in the crowd were mocking. “They’re drunk, that’s all!” they said.

These two verses describe a typical response of the crowd, leading up to Peter's speech. The crowd continued to be amazed (see 2:7), but their amazement led them to be perplexed and to try to figure out what was happening. Some were mocking. Others were speculating that the believers were drunk. Such confusion and the drawing of such wrong conclusions was just the prodding Peter needed to clear things up. There will always be those who misunderstand the working of God, who mock it and call into question its integrity. Christians can either wring their hands and worry or, like Peter, seize the opportunity to tell the watching world about the work of God in their midst.

PETER PREACHES TO A CROWD / 2:14–41

In Luke's history of the church, there is always a close connection between the activity of God's Spirit and the proclamation of the gospel. Time and again those who experience the baptism or filling of the Spirit begin

immediately speaking with others concerning the truth about God and his Son, Jesus Christ (1:8; 2:4, 17; 4:8, 31; 6:10; 10:44–46; 13:9; 19:6).

This was certainly the case when the Spirit of God was poured out at Pentecost. The people gathered in Jerusalem were astonished to hear the Spirit-filled Palestinian Jews speaking fluently about God in foreign languages they had never learned. Confusion reigned until Peter delivered a convicting sermon, challenging his audience: “Turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins” (2:38). God used this sermon, rich with Old Testament references, to draw about three thousand men and women to himself.

2:14 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.”

Peter, the early spokesman for the Twelve, seized the opportunity. He stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd. Peter explained to the people why they should listen to the testimony of the believers: because the Old Testament prophecies had been entirely fulfilled in Jesus (2:14–21), because Jesus is the Messiah (2:25–36), and because the risen Christ could change their lives (2:37–40).

A FRESH START

Peter had been an unstable leader during Jesus’ ministry; he had even denied that he knew Jesus (John 18:15–18, 25–27). But Christ had forgiven and restored him (John 21:15–19). This was a new Peter, humble but bold. His confidence came from the Holy Spirit, who made him a powerful and dynamic speaker. Have you ever felt as if you’ve made such bad mistakes that God could never forgive and use you? No matter what sins you have committed, God promises to forgive you and make you useful for his kingdom. Allow him to forgive you and use you effectively to serve him.

2:15–18 “These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It’s only nine in the morning! 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. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.’”

Peter answered the accusation that they were all drunk (2:13) by saying it was much too early in the day for that. He then proceeded to tie the event the crowd had just witnessed to the words of the prophet Joel, quoting from Joel 2:28–32. Not everything mentioned in Joel 2:28–32 was occurring that particular morning. The last days include all the days between Christ’s first and second comings; it is another way of saying “from now on.” Peter was reminding these Jewish listeners that from prophecies like this one recorded by Joel, “I will pour out my Spirit on all people,” they should recognize the event they had just witnessed as the work of the Spirit. It would be to all kinds of people—Jews and Gentiles, rich and poor—not just to kings and priests.

The “prophesying” mentioned by Peter is likely not only prediction of the future but also declaration of the nature and will of God. The visions and the dreams were common means that God used to reveal himself to all people. The point was that the insight into these visions and dreams would be the product of the Spirit’s work. At Pentecost the Holy Spirit was released throughout the entire world—to men, women, slave owners, slaves, Jews, and Gentiles. Everyone can receive the Spirit. This was a revolutionary thought for first-century Jews. Pentecost was designed to be a clear indication—to Jew and Gentile alike—that the messianic age had arrived. The Messiah had come!

2:19–20 “I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.”

Not everything mentioned in Joel 2:28–32 was happening that particular morning. This part of Joel’s prophecy probably refers to the future period surrounding the second coming of Christ, placing the period of the church age (between Christ’s ascension and his return) between verses 18 and 19 (see Revelation 6:12). These events bear more resemblance to the phenomena of the Tribulation period as spelled out by many other Old Testament prophets, as well as Jesus himself (see Matthew 24:14, 21, 29–30 and the judgments of Revelation 8, 9, and 16).

It is possible that Peter was quoting the entire prophecy from Joel—even some of the parts that are still future—in order to avoid being accused of improper use of Scripture (the crowd would certainly know the Joel passage) and to get all the way through Joel’s passage to its final sentence, quoted in the next verse.

2:21 “And anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

This is Peter’s punch line. This salvation is available to anyone. Any person who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. God’s special relationship with Israel will continue, but it has been broadened to include everyone who calls on the name of the Lord. God’s plans for Israel had their climax in Christ. Access to God—for all people—now comes through Jesus Christ. With these words Peter witnessed to the crowd, as Jesus had predicted (1:8).

It would be a while before these new believers understood that the “anyone” included Gentiles. God had to work in a special way to make Peter understand that the message was meant for the whole world, not just the Jews (see Acts 10).

ANYONE IS ELIGIBLE

Quoting the prophet Joel, Peter announced that “anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” According to this verse (quoted also in Romans 10:13), the issue in salvation isn’t who a person is or what he or she has done; the issue is simple trust and humility. Anyone who looks to the Lord for forgiveness will find it. That person will be saved. What a fantastic promise! Who in your life needs the saving touch of God? Ask the Father to work in their lives, to draw them to the Son (John 6:44), and to bring them to salvation.

2:22 “People of Israel, listen! God publicly endorsed Jesus of Nazareth by doing wonderful miracles, wonders, and signs through him, as you well know.”

The coming of the Messiah, the miracles, and the events described by Joel were all well-established concepts to these people of Israel (the Jews). Now all that remained was for Peter to connect those events to Jesus of Nazareth—the teacher many of them had heard and seen, the teacher who had been crucified. The term “Messiah” (Christ) occurs often in this speech (2:31, 36, 38) as Peter made the clear connection between Jesus and the one David spoke of prophetically. “Jesus of Nazareth is the long-awaited Messiah” is the theme of this sermon (2:14–36) and the basis for the ensuing call to faith.

Peter began this sermon by stating that God himself had publicly endorsed Jesus by doing wonderful miracles, wonders, and signs through him. Certainly many of the gathered crowd had seen or heard of the famous ministry of Jesus. For several years he had been speaking to huge crowds and performing incredible miracles, often in the full view of thousands of people (the miraculous “feedings,” for example). Thus, when Peter said

“as you well know,” he was reminding his audience that many of them were familiar with Jesus and his ministry.

2:23 “But you followed God’s prearranged plan. With the help of lawless Gentiles, you nailed him to the cross and murdered him.”

With little forewarning Peter suddenly accused his Jewish audience of an awful participation in the Messiah’s death. This is a perfect presentation of God’s sovereignty and people’s responsibility—both in the same sentence. God’s prearranged plan was his sovereign will to bring salvation to people through the death and resurrection of Christ. Though God’s will is sovereign, he works through people and events of history (see 4:28). Even putting Jesus to death fulfilled God’s plan. God’s prearranged plan led to Christ’s death, but people were culpable. The lawless Gentiles (the Romans) had been involved, but they had been merely “helping.” Ultimately, the Jews had been responsible. Whether or not anyone in this audience had literally participated in the trials, accusations, and crucifixion (many in the crowd could have been involved) was not important. Peter was saying that they were at least culpable because, as Jews, they had missed their Messiah and had allowed their leaders to kill him. Thus, they were guilty by their relationship to the actual murderers. It was as if Peter were pointing his finger at the crowd and shouting, “You nailed him to the cross and murdered him.”

When I get to heaven, I shall see three wonders there: The first wonder will be to see many people there whom I did not expect to see. The second wonder will be to miss many people whom I did expect to see. The third and greatest wonder of all will be to find myself there. — John Newton

ACCESSORIES TO MURDER

Peter boldly blamed Christ’s murder on the Jews gathered for Pentecost. It is possible that some in Peter’s audience were actually part of the mob that shouted to Pilate, “Crucify him!” (Luke 23:18–24). But others were probably not even in Jerusalem during those fateful events. Nevertheless, Peter identified them all (“people of Israel”—2:22) as accomplices in the execution of Christ: “You nailed him to the cross and murdered him” (2:23). There is a sense in which we all—Jews and “lawless Gentiles” alike—share the blame for Christ’s death. Our sins sent him to Calvary. He was nailed to the cross for our crimes. He was punished in our place. When is the last time you thanked God for this stunning display of mercy and grace?

2:24 “But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power.”

But the murdered Messiah had not stayed dead. God raised him up, and many people could testify to having seen the risen Christ. This was a powerful statement because many of the people listening to Peter’s words had been in Jerusalem fifty days earlier at Passover and may have seen or heard about the crucifixion of this “great teacher.” Jesus’ resurrection was the ultimate sign that what he said about himself was true. Without the Resurrection, no one would have any reason to believe in Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:14).

Notice here that the Resurrection is attributed to God himself. The Resurrection is a foundational part of the preaching of Acts (see 2:32; 3:15, 26; 4:10; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30, 33–34, 37; 17:31; 26:23). The grave could not keep the author of life, the Creator (John 1:1–14; Colossians 1:15–17). Peter phrased it appropriately: it was impossible for the author of life to be held by the power of the grave!

2:25–28 “David said about him: ‘I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will live in hope, because you

will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.’”

Peter continued his witness to Jesus’ Messiahship by quoting from Psalm 16:8–11, written by David. He explained that David was not writing about himself because David had died and was buried (2:29); his audience would have walked right past his tomb many times in their pilgrimages to Jerusalem. This quote from Psalm 16 and the one from Psalm 110:1 (2:34–35) were both prophesying Jesus’ resurrection (2:24). Peter’s audience understood “decay” to mean the grave. The emphasis is that Jesus’ body had not been left to decay but had been, in fact, resurrected and glorified. Peter wanted his audience to realize that David, though confident of his own resurrection, was predicting the resurrection of the Messiah in these psalms.

2:29–31 “Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. 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.”

The Old Testament makes a solid case for the resurrection of the Messiah—and this was very important for Peter’s Jewish listeners to understand. Peter argued that the words of this psalm could not have been referring to David himself, for David died and was buried. The reference to his tomb may have been a site on the south side of Jerusalem, near the pool of Siloam.

If David was not speaking of himself, then he was speaking as a prophet; he was writing about one who would be resurrected from the dead. The oath looks back at Psalm 132:11 and 2 Samuel 7:15–16, recording the promises God made to David that one of his descendants would always sit on the throne. David did have children who ruled, but this promise was for someone to be on the throne for eternity. That king would be Jesus Christ. David, in writing this psalm, had been seeing what was ahead and therefore had written of the resurrection of the Christ. The Jewish listeners of Peter’s day understood the words of this psalm, as well as others, as referring to the Messiah.

Resurrection Facts

The Christian claim is not that Jesus “lived on in our hearts.” It is that he was crucified, buried, and then seen alive—bodily—by named people over a defined stretch of days. Scripture gives the witness list. History and archaeology do not replace that witness, but they do constrain what a serious person can dismiss.

Who Saw Jesus

The earliest summary is not a late Gospel. It is a creed Paul says he received and then passed on. Most scholars date the core of 1 Corinthians 15:3–7 to within a few years of the crucifixion—often to the early 30s—because Paul uses the rabbinic language of receiving tradition and because he visited Peter and James in Jerusalem (Galatians 1:18–19). James D. G. Dunn put it this way: the tradition was “formulated... within months of Jesus’ death.” Even skeptical scholars treat this material as extremely early.

Paul writes (NIV): “For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he

appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.” (1 Corinthians 15:3–8)

The Gospels fill in names and settings. Taken together, the New Testament reports these encounters:

Witness(es) – Setting – Text

Mary Magdalene First at the tomb John 20:11–18; Mark 16:9

The other women Leaving the tomb Matthew 28:8–10

Peter (Cephas) Not narrated in detail Luke 24:34; 1 Corinthians 15:5

Two disciples Road to Emmaus Luke 24:13–35

Ten disciples Evening, Jerusalem (Thomas absent) John 20:19–23; Luke 24:36–43

The Eleven, including Thomas Eight days later John 20:24–29

Seven disciples Sea of Tiberias / Galilee John 21:1–23

The Eleven A mountain in Galilee Matthew 28:16–20

More than five hundred at once Unspecified gathering 1 Corinthians 15:6

James, the Lord’s brother Unspecified 1 Corinthians 15:7

All the apostles Unspecified 1 Corinthians 15:7

The gathered disciples Ascension from the Mount of Olives Acts 1:3–11; Luke 24:50–53

Saul of Tarsus (Paul) Road to Damascus, later Acts 9; 1 Corinthians 15:8

Several facts sit inside that list.

- The first announced witness is a woman. In the first-century world that is a poor way to invent a story you hope courts and councils will believe.
- The appearances are not one private vision. They include groups, a meal, touch, conversation, and—in John’s language—Jesus eating fish (John 21:12–13; cf. Luke 24:41–43).
- Paul names living witnesses. “Most of whom are still living” is an invitation to check, not a metaphor.
- James had not been a believer during Jesus’ public ministry (John 7:5). An appearance to the skeptical brother is hard to explain as family wish-fulfillment.
- Paul had been hunting the church. His encounter is not the grief of a heartbroken disciple.

Duration and Timeline

Luke is explicit:

“After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.” (Acts 1:3)

Forty days is the window between Easter morning and the ascension. Within that span:

- Resurrection morning: the empty tomb and the first appearances in and around Jerusalem (John 20; Luke 24; Matthew 28).
- That same day: Emmaus and the evening appearance in the locked room.
- About a week later: Thomas.
- Sometime after: Galilee—the lake and the mountain.
- The close of the forty days: final instructions and the ascension from the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:9–12).
- Later, outside that forty-day window: the risen Lord appears to Paul.

John notes that the lake appearance was “the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead” (John 21:14)—meaning the third recorded appearance to that group, not the third appearance overall.

Paul later says, “For many days he was seen by those who had traveled with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his witnesses to our people” (Acts 13:31). The church’s public claim from the start was not a rumor from one night. It was a stretch of days, meals, and named people.

What History Can and Cannot Do

No Roman court stenographer filmed the stone rolling back. What historians can test are public facts that sit next to the claim:

1. Jesus of Nazareth was crucified under Pontius Pilate.
2. He was buried.
3. The tomb was reported empty very early.
4. A large number of people soon said they had seen him alive.
5. That proclamation began in Jerusalem, the last place a stolen-body hoax would be easy to sustain.
6. Hostile writers do not say, “Nothing happened.” They say the movement exploded after an execution.

Gary Habermas and others have long noted that a wide band of scholars—including many who reject the supernatural—grant the crucifixion, the burial, the origin of the resurrection belief, and the conversion of James and Paul. The fight is not usually “Did they claim this?” The fight is “What best explains it?”

Kenneth Samples’ line is fair as a summary of that debate: the empty tomb is among the better-supported historical pieces of the Easter story, with early attestation, fit with Jewish burial custom, and no surviving first-century Jewish or Roman counter-story that produced a body. An empty tomb alone is not the resurrection. An empty tomb plus appearances plus the sudden birth of the church is the set of facts that has to be explained.

Non-Biblical Historians and Writers

These sources do not preach Easter. That is why they matter. They are outsiders describing a man who was killed and a movement that would not die.

Flavius Josephus (Jewish historian, *Antiquities*, c. A.D. 93).

He mentions “James, the brother of Jesus who was called Christ,” executed in Jerusalem (*Ant.* 20.200). That shorter notice is almost universally accepted as authentic. The longer *Testimonium Flavianum* (*Ant.* 18.63–64) says Jesus was a wise man, a doer of startling deeds, crucified under Pilate at the urging of Jewish leaders, and that those who loved him did not abandon him. The received Greek text also says he appeared alive on the third day. Most scholars think Christian copyists later strengthened some phrases (“He was the Christ,” “if it be lawful to call him a man”). The core—Jesus lived, taught, was executed under Pilate, and his followers continued—is widely treated as Josephus. A 2025 Oxford study by T. C. Schmidt has argued that more of the passage may be original than the old consensus allowed. Either way, a first-century Jewish historian who is not a Gospel writer knows the name, the brother, the execution, and the movement.

Tacitus (Roman historian, *Annals* 15.44, c. A.D. 116).

Hostile to Christians. He writes that “Christus... suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of... Pontius Pilatus,” and that the “deadly superstition” broke out again in Judea and reached Rome. Tacitus confirms the execution under Pilate in Tiberius’ reign and that the movement survived the execution. He calls the faith a superstition. He does not call it a rumor that Jesus never existed.

Pliny the Younger (Roman governor, letter to Trajan, c. A.D. 112).

Christians met “on a fixed day before dawn,” sang “a hymn to Christ as to a god,” and bound themselves to honest lives. Within eighty years of Easter, a pagan official reports worship of the crucified Jesus as divine.

Lucian of Samosata (Greek satirist, 2nd century).

He mocks Christians for worshiping “the crucified sophist” and living by his laws. Mockery still admits the crucifixion and the worship.

Suetonius mentions disturbances in Rome under Claudius connected with “Chrestus,” a debated reference.

The Babylonian Talmud later speaks of Jesus’ execution on the eve of Passover. Mara bar Serapion, a Syrian, speaks of the Jews’ “wise king.” These are thinner strands, but they run in the same direction: a real executed teacher whose followers did not scatter for good.

What these writers give you is not a lab report of the resurrection. They give you this: Jesus was killed under Pilate; his followers immediately treated him as alive and worthy of worship; and neither Rome nor the synagogue explained the church by producing a corpse.

Archaeological Setting

Archaeology cannot photograph Easter morning. It can test whether the Gospel world is invented.

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

In October 2016, restorers opened the Edicule and exposed the limestone burial shelf traditionally identified as the place Jesus’ body was laid. National Geographic reported the original rock bed intact beneath later marble. Mortar dating placed the shrine’s construction around A.D. 345—matching Constantine’s fourth-century church, not a Crusader invention. Ground-penetrating radar indicated the cave walls still stand. Other first-century rock-cut tombs in the same complex show the site was a Jewish burial area of the right period. That does not prove this shelf is Jesus’ bench. It does show the traditional tomb is a real Second Temple burial cave, venerated from the 300s on a spot that fits the Gospels: outside the first-century wall, near a crucifixion site, hewn from rock, with a rolling-stone type of tomb nearby in the same cemetery.

Crucifixion as practiced.

The heel bone of Yehohanan, a first-century crucified man found in a Jerusalem ossuary, still had a nail through it. That find confirmed what the Gospels assume: Rome crucified Jews in Judea, bodies could be taken down and buried, and nails were used. The man of the Gospels is not a mythic victim of a punishment Rome never used there.

Ossuaries and early Christian marks.

E. L. Sukenik published ossuaries from Dominus Flevit and related sites with charcoal crosses and inscriptions. He called some of this “the earliest records of Christianity.” That is a claim about early Christian presence in Jerusalem, not a photograph of the risen Jesus. Names like “Yeshua” were common. The Talpiot tomb “Jesus family” theory is strongly disputed and should not be preached as settled archaeology. Use Sukenik for this limited point: the Jesus movement left physical traces in Jerusalem very early. Do not load those boxes with more weight than they can carry.

What archaeology does not do.

It does not produce a signed affidavit from the angel. It shows the burial world of the Gospels is real, the traditional tomb site is ancient and continuous, and crucifixion-plus-burial in Jerusalem is not a later legend.

The Shroud of Turin and Jeremiah Johnston

Dr. Jeremiah J. Johnston, who earned his doctorate on the resurrection and has written extensively on it, was for years a shroud skeptic. He now argues the Shroud of Turin is the burial cloth of Jesus and that the image is physical evidence consistent with a crucified man who left the cloth without ordinary decomposition or artistic fabrication. He has made that case on national platforms and in churches: the shroud, in his words, gathers “the death, burial, and resurrection of the historical Jesus” into one artifact.

What Johnston and shroud researchers emphasize:

- The cloth is a single linen sheet, about 14 feet 4 inches by 3 feet 7 inches.
- The image is of a scourged, crucified man: wrist wounds (not the later artistic palms), a side wound, unmarked legs, a scalp ring of puncture wounds consistent with a cap of thorns, and scourge marks across the body.
- STURP (1978) reported no paint, dye, or brushstroke as the cause of the image. The image is extremely superficial—Johnston often says on the order of two microns—while the blood soaks through the linen. Blood and image behave differently, which is hard to square with a painted fake.
- Blood studies associated with Alan Adler describe real hemoglobin and trauma chemistry, including bilirubin consistent with severe torture, which can keep blood looking reddish.
- Pollen work (notably Max Frei, debated in method) has been used to argue for plants that bloom around Jerusalem in spring.
- Johnston cites later work such as wide-angle X-ray scattering on linen fibers that some Italian researchers (2022) said resembles first-century cloth more than medieval cloth.
- Mathematician Bruno Barberis has been quoted on the combined improbability that this is some other crucified man.

Honesty belongs here too. The 1988 radiocarbon tests dated samples to the Middle Ages (roughly 1260–1390). That result is why many scientists still call the shroud medieval. Shroud advocates argue the tested corner was a later repair or contaminated. That debate is not closed in the academy. A preacher can say: Johnston and a body of specialists now argue the carbon date does not settle the cloth, and the image remains unexplained by ordinary art. A preacher should not say: Science has unanimously proved this is Jesus’ shroud. The resurrection does not hang on Turin. If the shroud is authentic, it is a severe mercy—the wound-map of Good Friday frozen in linen. If it is not, the creed in 1 Corinthians 15 is still earlier than any relic.

Johnston’s stronger service to the church may be the sentence under the relic: the resurrection has been under-taught. The first Christians did not offer a mood. They offered witnesses.

How to State the Case without Overclaiming

You can say with a straight face:

- The resurrection was preached immediately, in Jerusalem, by people who named living witnesses.
- The first creed is astonishingly early.
- Women are the first tomb witnesses.
- Enemies of the faith concede the crucifixion under Pilate and the stubborn survival of the church.
- The traditional tomb is a real first-century-style burial site continuously marked from the fourth century.
- Crucifixion and Jewish burial in that city are archaeologically real.

You should not say:

- Josephus’ unedited paragraph is a Christian Easter sermon (the text has a history).
- The Talpiot ossuaries prove the family tomb of Jesus.

- The Shroud is beyond all scientific dispute.
- Archaeology “photographed” the risen Christ.

The apostolic claim is still the center: “He appeared.” Forty days. Named people. Then a church that would rather die than say they had been mistaken about breakfast with a dead man on a Galilean shore.

That is the fact-pattern. The interpretation is the old one: “God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact” (Acts 2:32, NIV).

2:32 “This prophecy was speaking of Jesus, whom God raised from the dead, and we all are witnesses of this.”

Having begun by tying these Old Testament references to Jesus of Nazareth, here Peter again made it clear that David’s prophecy was speaking of Jesus.

The resurrection of Christ had taken place less than two months previously. The post-Resurrection appearances and instruction sessions of the forty days prior to Christ’s ascension must have caused a stir around the city. Peter pointed out that he and the others with him—who had just experienced this Spirit’s coming—had been witnesses to the predicted resurrection of Christ.

2:33 “Now he sits on the throne of highest honor in heaven, at God’s right hand. And the Father, as he had promised, gave him the Holy Spirit to pour out upon us, just as you see and hear today.”

Peter had one more major point to make: this crucified one, the resurrected one, is now the exalted one, who occupies the throne of highest honor in heaven, at God’s right hand (see 5:30–31; Ephesians 1:20; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; 1 Peter 3:22). Not only is Christ the predicted one in the psalms; not only had he risen from the grave; he now sits in the most authoritative, sovereign position in the universe.

That is why Jesus had the authority to pour out the Spirit with results that the audience could see and hear.

2:34–35 “For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, ‘The Lord said to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.”’”

In Psalm 110:1, again David was not speaking of himself but of Christ. This verse is the most frequently quoted Old Testament passage in the New Testament (thirteen times) and was the primary text used to explain the exaltation of Christ. The Jews believed that this psalm referred to their coming Messiah. All three synoptic gospels—Matthew 22:41–46; Mark 12:35–37; Luke 20:41–44—report that Jesus applied this verse to himself as the one having the highest authority because he would be instructed to sit at God’s right hand. The victory belongs to Christ and not to any created being. The greatest archangels stand before God (Luke 1:19; Revelation 8:2), but none are allowed to sit, for sitting next to God would indicate equality. Jesus’ sitting also indicates the completion of his task, the successful accomplishment of his mission.

God promised to make Jesus’ enemies a footstool—they would be under his feet. This pictures Christ as completely victorious over his enemies. God does not place Jesus’ enemies under Jesus’ feet because Jesus is not capable of doing it himself. Instead, this action shows that the Father approves of Jesus’ work. The two work together for a common purpose. Jesus’ honor cannot be superseded. Implicit in the quote of this psalm, Peter was warning his listeners that they should not want to be numbered any longer among the “enemies” of this one who was now high and lifted up.

2:36 “So let it be clearly known by everyone in Israel that God has made this Jesus whom you crucified to be both Lord and Messiah!”

Peter, ever the good “witness” that Jesus had said he would be, concluded his message with a solid review of his main point: So let it be clearly known by everyone in Israel that Jesus was the Messiah. In the prophesied plan of God, this Jesus of Nazareth had been crucified by the Jews, raised from the dead, and exalted to the throne of God.

Throughout his message, Peter consistently applied the messianic prophecies, the messianic psalms, and the miraculous Resurrection to Jesus of Nazareth (see 2:22–23, 32). His concluding remarks did so as well. With the proclamation of Jesus as Lord and Messiah, Peter reached the climax of his message. The reference to Jesus as “Lord” was likely, in this context, connecting Jesus to Yahweh. It was another clear affirmation of Christ’s deity.

A Savior not quite God is like a bridge broken at the further end.

— Bishop Moule

2:37 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

The term “cut to the heart” speaks of genuine pain. It means to “strike, prick violently, sting sharply, stun.” The crowd was stunned! They asked the question that warms the heart of any messenger of the gospel: “What shall we do?” Peter was ready with the answer.

TRANSFORMING TRUTH

After Peter’s powerful, Spirit-filled message, the people were deeply moved and asked, “What shall we do?” This is the basic question to ask. It is not enough to be sorry for our sins—we must let God forgive them; then we must live like forgiven people. Has God spoken to you through his Word or through the words of another believer? Remember: God didn’t give his truth to merely provide more information; instead, he wants transformation. Like Peter’s audience, ask God what you should do; then obey without delay.

2:38 Peter replied, “Each of you must turn from your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

In answer to the people’s question, Peter presented a fourfold challenge:

1. Turn from your sins—In other words, “repent.” The Greek word, *metanoēsate*, means “change your outlook” or “change your mind.” This is not just sorrow or even sorrow for sin but an actual change in the way a person thinks. It is a basic and wholehearted change of mind that results in a change of purpose, direction, and values. “Each of you” reminds the listener (and modern reader) that this message is for all. Everyone needs to make a decision about Christ. His offer is the only effective solution for the sin problem that plagues every descendant of Adam.

2. Turn to God—In addition to turning from sin, people must turn to God. It does no good to turn from sin without turning then to the one who can solve the sin problem.

3. Be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins—Some believe that baptism was already being used for Jewish converts as a sign of their conversion to Judaism. John the Baptist had called for baptism as a sign of repentance and a changed heart—an external, nonverbal expression or celebration of an inward reality. For believers, baptism is visible proof of repentance and commitment to follow Jesus, the Messiah.

The idea of baptism “for the forgiveness of sins” does not mean that baptism results in forgiveness of sins but rather that forgiveness of sins as a result of accepting Jesus as Savior should result in a baptism—an outward display of an inner conviction. Repentance, not baptism, is what brings forgiveness.

4. Receive the gift of the Holy Spirit—Only through the coming of the Holy Spirit into believers’ hearts can they truly experience forgiveness of sin. The “gift of the Holy Spirit” (not multiple or varied gifts but rather a singular gift) is the Spirit himself. The Holy Spirit is a gift from God. As Jesus had promised, he is the Comforter and the one who guides his people.

FOLLOWING CHRIST

Peter told those who had responded to his message to repent and be baptized. True followers of Christ recognize the necessity of repentance and the importance of baptism. To repent means literally to “change your mind”—about who God is (he is the Lord and Judge and Savior of all the earth) and about where to find life (not in living selfishly and rebelliously but in humble trust and obedience to God). Practically, it involves changing course. We stop running away from our holy God, and we turn to Christ, depending only on him for forgiveness, mercy, guidance, and purpose. In repentance we recognize that we cannot save ourselves—only God can save us. Baptism is that crucial step of obedience that identifies us with Christ and with the community of believers. It is one of the marks of a true disciple and a strong sign of faith. Have you repented of your sin and trusted in Jesus for salvation? Have you been baptized?

2:39–40 “The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.” With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.”

The truths presented in the previous verses here find their universal application. This promise of the work of the Spirit in the life of the believer has a personal application (for you), a generational application (and your children), and a global application (for all who are far off, perhaps foreshadowing those who were far away from this Jewish temple, that is, the Gentiles). Luke recorded no more of Peter’s words to the gathered crowd except to say that Peter kept talking for a long time (with many other words), warning and pleading with the people to be saved.

2:41 Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church—about three thousand in all.

What a response! Three thousand people believed and took the step of faith in Christ. Those who believed were baptized—they took that first step of obedience, publicly identifying themselves with Christ. And they were added to the church; that is, they immediately joined the fellowship of believers.

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Sermon Notes:

Good morning. This is a special Sunday of celebration as we will be baptizing several people who said yes to Jesus in just a little bit.

There is absolutely nothing more important in this life than accepting Christ as your Lord and Savior.

Welcome to family and friends watching online.

Speaking of online, here are the AVC Connections... YouTube, App, Facebook/Website, Text Alerts- If you're not in the system, let us know.

[Let's Pray]

I titled this shorter sermon: **"What Shall We Do?"

I'm sure you've had moments in your life where something dramatic happens and you say to yourselves:

PP What Should I Do?

[Story of friend driving front-end loader into a swamp]

In Acts chapter 2 it's recorded that 3,000 people all at once exclaimed: "What shall we do?"

Let me give you the context and scene of Acts 2.

-Thousands of Jews and people from all over the Roman Empire were gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate the harvest.

-This was 50 days after Jesus Christ's resurrection... and 40 days after He ascended into heaven.

-He told His disciples to go to Jerusalem and wait for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

-I want to read a lengthy passage that explains what happened.

-We have a PP and some slides to go along with Acts 2.

PP Let's Read Acts 2:1-8

PP Slide of Countries

PP Read Acts 2:11b-21 / Stick with me.

PP Read Acts 2:22-24

"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. 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. 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."

PP Read Acts 2:29-36

Here is the ah-ha moment...

PP Acts 2:37: When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"

"What Shall We Do?"

PP Acts 2:38-41

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. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call." With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

Friends... Jesus Christ died for your sins... and resurrected to life on the 3rd day.

What shall you do... Repent of your sins and invite Jesus into your life.

[Closing Prayer]

Devotional Questions:

1. When the Word Cuts to the Heart / Read: Acts 2:22–24, 36–37

Peter did not offer a suggestion. He told them the truth about Jesus: endorsed by God, crucified, raised, now both Lord and Messiah. When they heard it, they were "cut to the heart" and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"

When was the last time Scripture or a sermon stung you—not just informed you? What truth about Jesus in these verses still needs to land that way?

2. Together, Waiting for What Jesus Promised/ Read: Acts 1:4–5, 14 and Acts 2:1

Pentecost was fifty days after the Resurrection and ten days after the Ascension. Jesus had told them to wait in

Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit. They were not inventing a plan. They were together, praying, ready for God to keep His word. The three thousand who believed that day were the firstfruits of a harvest still being gathered.

Where are you waiting on a promise of Jesus right now? Are you waiting alone, or with the people of God?

3. The Unseen Wind and the Miracle of a Changed Life/ Read: Acts 2:2–8

They heard a sound like a violent wind from heaven. What looked like tongues of fire settled on each of them. Everyone was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke in languages they had never learned—so the wonders of God could be heard by people from many nations. Wind is unseen; its effects are not. Fire purifies and ignites. Every believer in the room received. Do not miss this: the lasting miracle is not only wind and fire, but a life God actually changes.

If the Spirit is like wind—unseen, but leaving evidence—what evidence of His work would others be able to point to in you?

4. Repent: Change Your Mind and Your Direction/ Read: Acts 2:37–38

Peter’s first word was not “try harder.” It was “Repent.” The word means a real change of mind that turns a life—purpose, direction, and values. Sorrow is not yet repentance. Turning from sin without turning to God is not yet salvation. “Each of you” means no one is exempt, and no one is beyond the invitation.

Is there a specific sin, attitude, or direction you need to turn from—and a specific way you need to turn toward Jesus?

5. Baptism: The Public Yes/ Read: Acts 2:38, 41

“Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.” Baptism does not purchase forgiveness. Forgiveness comes through turning to Jesus. Baptism is the outward, obedient sign of an inward conviction—identifying with Christ and with His people. It is a disciple’s public yes.

If you have been baptized: what does that baptism still declare about who owns your life? If you have not: what is keeping you from this step of obedience?

6. The Gift Is the Spirit Himself—and the Promise Is Wide/ Read: Acts 2:17–21, 38–39

“And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.” In the Old Testament the Spirit came on a few, for a time, for a task. At Pentecost He was poured out on all who believe—sons and daughters, young and old, near and far. Receiving the Spirit begins the Christian life. Being filled with the Spirit is the ongoing need of every believer. Anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

Have you called on the name of the Lord and received the Spirit by trusting Jesus? Who in your life is still “far off,” and how will you pray and speak toward them?

7. Save Yourself from This Generation—Then Keep Walking/ Read: Acts 2:40–47

With many other words Peter warned them and pleaded, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” Three thousand responded. Then they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer. The first answer to “What shall we do?” was repent and be baptized. The next answer was a new way of life together.

What in this generation is shaping you more than Jesus is? Which of the four practices in Acts 2:42 is weakest in your life right now?